

Bible Lessons on The Creed

Charles H. Hayes, B.D.



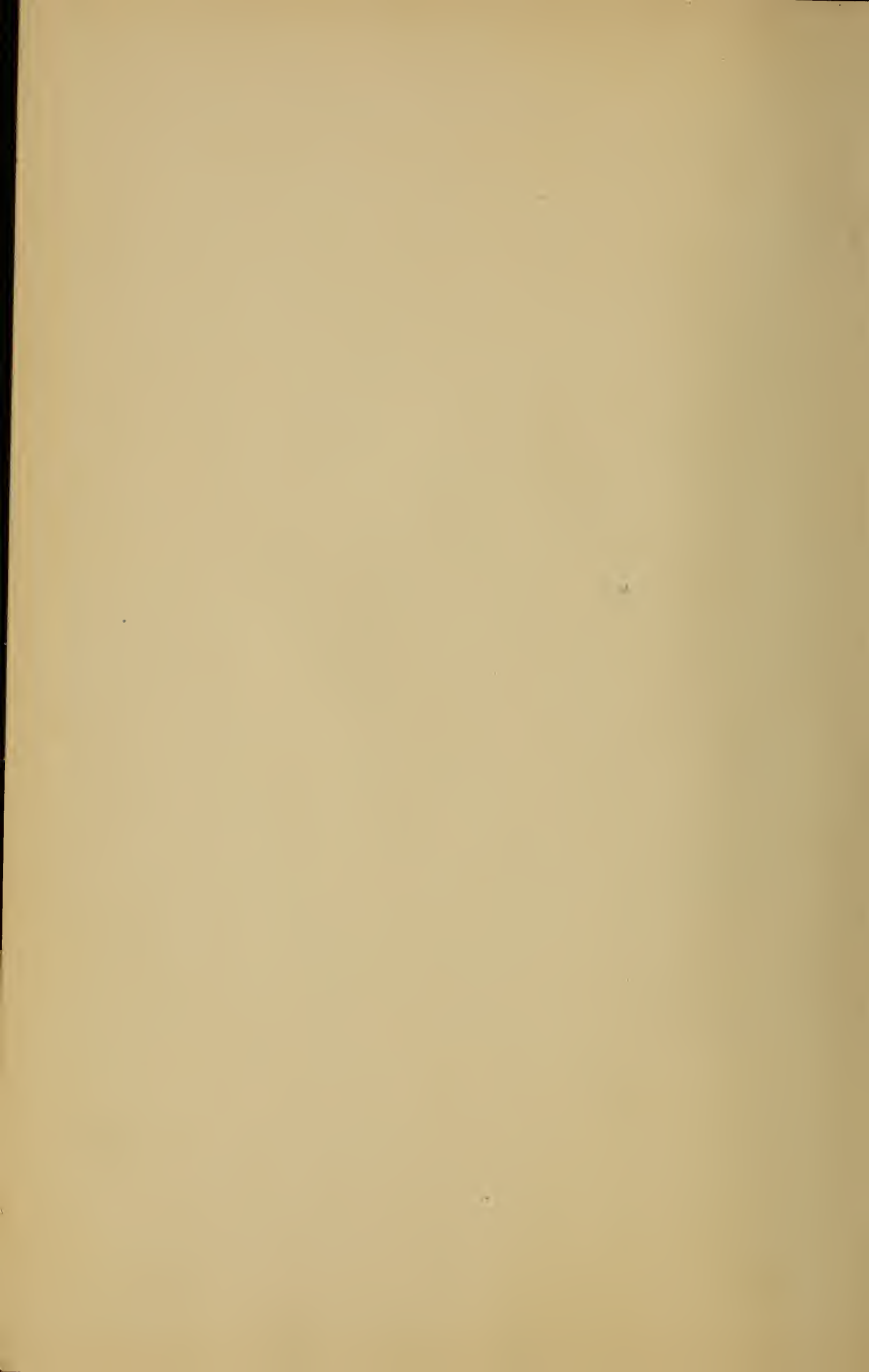
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BIBLE LESSONS ON THE CREED

BY

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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

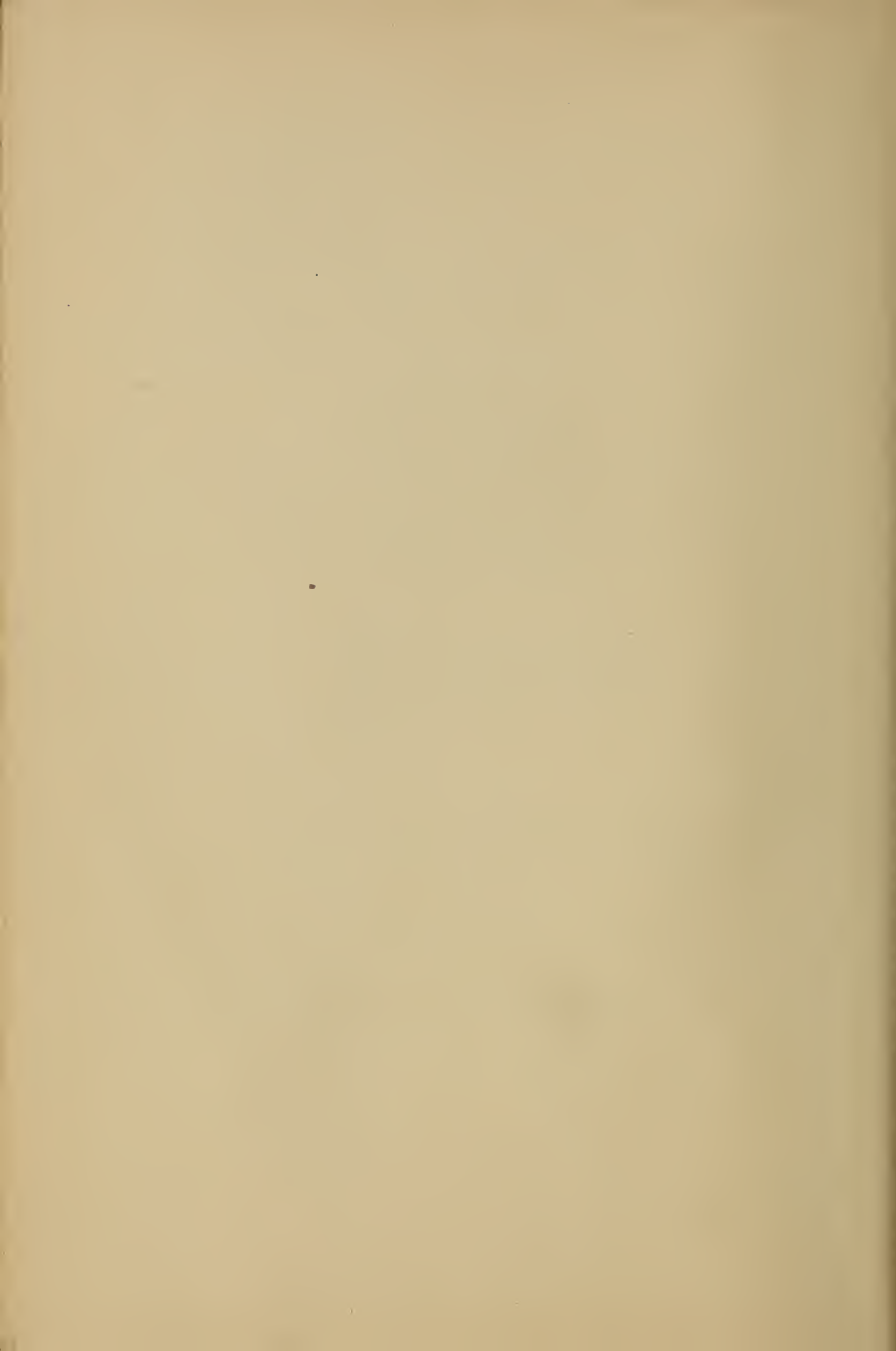
WHO TAUGHT ME, WHEN A CHILD, THE FAITH
WHICH IS FOR A MAN THE KEY TO ALL TRUTH
AND THE FOUNDATION OF RIGHT LIVING.

The acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

—BROWNING.

It is quite certain that what a man's conduct will be
will depend in the long run on what his real creed is.

—GORE.



PREFACE

To be of any service in teaching children Christian truth is so great a privilege that the labor spent upon this little book will be amply repaid if it is a help to Sunday-school teachers, and so fulfills the purpose for which it was undertaken. Friends suggest, however, that it may also be of use to some who are interested in studying for their own satisfaction the truths summarized in the Creeds. Such readers can readily pass over what is said as to ways of teaching the several lessons, or adapt it to their study. One thing, however, they should observe; since little can be learned of revealed truth without thoughtful reflection upon the Scriptures themselves, these lessons require to be read, as they have been written, with the Bible open. Otherwise many allusions to the Bible passages will be missed, and the lessons will at times seem to be aimless restatements of Scripture; whereas Bible passages have been paraphrased only when the slightly different words would indicate a more accurate translation, bring in details from a parallel passage, explain an obscure word, or emphasize a point. Brevity has been sought, moreover, and references have been made only to the most necessary passages of Scripture. The good old rule that references should be looked up becomes, therefore, indispensable.

In preparing these *Lessons* for the use of Sunday-schools,

the following plain principles have been kept in mind. Only important subjects can be taken up in our Sunday-schools, for the time is short in which to teach the weighty matters "that a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." The aim in the lesson for each Sunday, and in the course for any year, should be simple and single; for we must try to leave a definite impression every time we teach, and to get to the heart of our subject in the course as a whole. The teaching must be based directly on the Bible, and draw constantly from its rich stores. And finally, the methods of preparation and of work in class must be as effective as we can make them.

That the truths expressed in the Creed are of importance for a child to know is hardly open to question. The Creed is a summary of the Gospel story, a brief statement of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This we propose to take as the theme which our course shall endeavor to bring home to the children. And as the basis of each lesson we propose to take a passage of the Bible, so chosen as to set forth in order the great ways in which God has made himself known as the God of love. The theme of each lesson is, therefore, a certain aspect of the central theme of the course, and is, at the same time, definite and complete in itself. In the development of each lesson we aim to keep close to the revelation recorded in the Bible, and in the course as a whole to give prominence, as the Creed does, to those great facts in the life of Jesus Christ by which he is made manifest and God the Father is fully revealed through him. Thus the Bible supplies the sources for all our teaching.

The method of preparation and teaching here proposed is described under the heading *How to Teach the Creed*, and worked out in the following pages. How the children are expected to prepare the lessons is shown by the *Outline for Pupils*, to which the present *Lessons* correspond. Whether the method is practical and adapted for general use can be determined only by a fair trial. It has, at least, been planned and developed with the advice and cooperation of skilled teachers, and it is now offered to the Church only after being tested and improved by seven years' use. The *Outline* was printed in a simpler form in 1898, and helps for the teachers were prepared in manuscript. They both have been used since that time in St. Mark's Sunday-school, Washington. If the method has value, the credit is due to the teachers of St. Mark's; for it could have been worked out only by their intelligent and faithful cooperation, acknowledgment of which is most thankfully made.

Too great emphasis can hardly be laid on the fact that *this book is not intended to supply ready-made lessons*. It aims to give material for the teacher to use, and to present it in such a manner that good lessons can readily be prepared. But it is purposely arranged in such a way that the material is not available for teaching in its present form. *To use it you must make the material your own, think the lesson through, and plan how you will teach it in class.*

This, some may think, requires too much of the teacher. But surely no one will grudge time and pains, if results reward the effort. And it is found in practice that, even with the imperfect form of outline and helps hitherto in use, teachers succeed with this method, and the pupils' interest is

far greater than it was when lessons were used requiring less thought and care in preparation. The suggestions on *How to Teach the Creed* have been made rather full and explicit, and may seem formidable; but they will be found upon trial simpler than they appear at first sight. So, too, the section on *Our Knowledge of God* may be considered too theological. But the principles stated, though important, are simple, and can be grasped without serious difficulty by anyone who will give thought to them. It should be remembered also that what is there said is for the teachers' study of first principles, and is not at all intended to be used in teaching just as it stands.

These lessons are part of a systematic plan of instruction, intended especially for graded Sunday-schools, which is described in *Bible Lessons on Christian Duty*, to be published shortly. According to this plan they are the seventh-grade lessons, and are meant for pupils of the corresponding school grade, the seventh in the Washington public schools. The usual age of these pupils is twelve to fourteen. The lessons on the Creed are, however, complete in themselves, and can be used independently, and for older pupils.

In accordance with the custom followed in printing the Bible and Prayer Book, capitals are not used for pronouns referring to the Deity. And in printing references to verses, for example St. John iii. 16 to 22, the last number indicates that the passage runs to, and does not include, the corresponding verse.

The number of lessons is sufficient for a whole year, if introductory and closing lessons, reviews and festivals are allowed for. In many schools, however, the regular course

of instruction does not extend over the whole year. In this case lessons 7, 12, 16, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 36, 39 and 42, or some of them, may each be combined with the lesson following; or lessons 7, 14, 16, 17, 21, 27, 28, 29, 36 and 37 may be omitted. Lesson 44 ought by no means to be omitted, nor should the last part of the course, referring to God the Holy Ghost, be hastily treated. It is important therefore to map out the work of the year early. When several classes are studying the subject, it is well to follow one plan with them all.

No one would choose the Creed as the theme for a series of lessons, involving considerable labor to prepare, who did not really hold the doctrines expressed in it to be true and of the utmost practical value. While this is obvious, some may suppose that the author accepts the Creed as a mere matter of course, without fairly considering critical and philosophical difficulties. He asks to be believed when he says that he has carefully studied the exegesis of each Bible passage used, has reckoned with questions of criticism, and has thought out to the best of his ability the philosophical implications of his statements, especially of such as are concerned with the miraculous or supernatural. It would be out of place to discuss these matters in a book of this scope; but he may be allowed to declare that, although he is cognizant of the difficulties hindering many from belief, he is honestly convinced that the age-old faith of Christ's Church is confirmed by searching study of its historical bases, and justified by determined efforts to think clearly.

This little book, and the *Outline for Pupils* as well, are sent forth with the prayer that they may help some students

to know him better, "whom truly to know is everlasting life." And may there come to the lives of many children, through the teaching of faithful men and women in whatever way, a fuller measure of the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

C. H. H.

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Ascension-day, 1906.

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HOW TO TEACH THE CREED

Why we Study the Creed.—"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." So our Lord declares. It is therefore the most vitally important of all truth that we endeavour to lay hold of when we study the subjects that are outlined in the Creed. To know this truth, careful and thoughtful study is necessary, but before all else we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a faithful Christian life. Christ has promised the Holy Spirit as the guide into all truth for his Church and for the faithful; and he has told us that "if any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." The help of the Holy Spirit and a will that is set to do God's will he gives in answer to earnest and believing prayer.

Since the truths summarized in the Creed are the greatest that can come before our minds, it is natural that we should desire to know them, and the study of them should not be a task, but a delight. Other studies help us to know about the world which God has made, or about the government under which we live, and the conditions of life in which we now find ourselves; but this helps us to know of God himself, of his righteous government of the world, and of eternal life. And these truths, although great and wonderful, are not remote, abstract speculations, beyond our ability to lay hold of, and out of relation to practical life. They are definite, capable of being grasped, and of living force, because they are about the personal God, who has made himself

known as the God of love. Our study of the Creed, to be sure, will be a dry and formidable undertaking, if we suppose that it consists in trying to understand a series of difficult propositions, and in proving them by patching together fragments of Scripture. But we really are trying to know God himself better, and we learn of him through the harmonious story of his merciful dealings with men. And in teaching the Creed we are not merely presenting certain statements however true; but our aim is to set forth him who first loved us, and sent his Son into the world that we might have life in him; our purpose is to arouse and strengthen in the children's hearts the love that responds to God's love; and the outcome in their lives should be truer and more willing service.

Studying the Subject.—In preparing to teach the profound truths that are briefly put into words in the Creed, the first thing to be aimed at is a clear general view. For in order to teach any part of a subject well a right point of view for the whole is no less necessary than accuracy in details. To study a subject or a course of lessons piecemeal, and just keep ahead of the class, must result in feeble teaching; the subject will never be rightly understood, nor will the plan of the lessons be fairly appreciated. Begin your study, then, well in advance of the time when you first meet your class, and, if this book is to be used, read it through before preparing any lessons in detail. This general preparation should begin with a careful consideration of the principles stated under the heading *Our Knowledge of God*. Then go over the lessons rapidly, surveying the work of the entire year. In this reading look up the text and the passage of Scripture on which each lesson is based, but postpone the consideration of details.

To depend upon one book is a mistake in any study, and the present subject is inexhaustible. You will find it profit-

able therefore to read: Gore, *The Creed of the Christian*; Newbolt, *The Church Catechism*, Part II.; Walpole, *Vital Religion or the Personal Knowledge of Christ*; or any similar book that your rector may advise. So too, when you are preparing the several lessons, Macpherson, *Lessons on the Church Catechism*, Part II., and Cawthorn, *Lessons on the Gospels for Sundays and Holy-days*, will be found very useful, as also such commentaries as your rector may recommend. The more thorough student is advised to read also Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ*. Acknowledgment is due to these authors for many points in the following pages.

Studying the Lesson.—When a general view of the truths that the Creed expresses has been gained, and the plan of lessons is understood, the teacher will be ready to study each lesson individually. In this the following method is recommended.

First, notice the theme indicated by the title of the lesson, and, as it were, set it up in the center of the mental picture you are about to compose. Then read the text and the Bible lesson carefully, keeping in mind that you wish to see clearly their bearing upon the theme. It is desirable, at this point, to compare the Revised Version or the Marginal Readings Bible with the King James Version, which the Prayer Book follows except in the Psalms. Occasionally you will find some important difference in reading, and even in the many passages where none is found, a different turn of the words or a less familiar phrase may give you new light on the meaning. You may also find it useful to look up the passage in some good commentary. But at least let your first step in preparing each lesson be to study the text and Bible passage in their relation to the subject of the lesson.

In the second place, go over the questions in the *Outline for Pupils*, and consider what answers should be given.

Remember that these questions are not intended to bring out all the points that are to be taught in class, but only such as the children may be expected to draw from the Bible passage. They will, however, be of service to you by suggesting certain connections between the passage and the topic of the lesson.

Then read what is said in these pages in explanation of the lesson, giving careful attention both to its general plan and to details, and constantly comparing what is said with the Scripture itself. You can gather further material from the books suggested above, and illustrations from your general reading and your own experience. Finally, notice that near the end of each lesson in this book an outline is given, each sentence of which sums up one of the preceding paragraphs. Read this outline over and ask yourself whether you have a clear idea corresponding to each sentence, and can recall the substance of the paragraph that it summarizes. This will help greatly to fix in the memory what has been studied.

Planning the Lesson.—You have studied what you propose to teach, but that is only the first step toward good teaching. You have spent time and trouble in gaining some knowledge. What do you mean to use it for? Presumably you have a more definite purpose in taking a Sunday-school class than merely to keep the boys or girls fairly quiet, and to fill up a tedious hour. If not, it certainly is not worth your while to pretend to teach, and you can hardly blame your class if their restlessness shows a proper appreciation of their teacher's incompetence. You surely have the purpose each Sunday of making those impressionable minds see as never before some definite aspect of God's love toward them. You have this one opportunity to teach this particular thing, and it is soberly true that those boys or girls will probably never learn it unless you

help them to learn it now. What do you mean to teach next Sunday? You must have a perfectly definite object, and decide how you will try to gain it, if you are to make an effective use of what you know.

And first you have to fix upon the one point that is to be the center of the day's lesson. This is expressed by the title of the lesson, and you have considered it already. But now try to write down the kernel of your theme in one sentence. For the object of every lesson that is well taught is single. The first thing for good teaching is to know precisely what you wish to teach, and without turning aside to work for that. Your subject is the meaning of "I believe in" or "sitteth at the right hand of the Father." Well then, you propose to teach: I believe in God, because he showed his love toward us by sending his Son into the world; or, our ascended Lord possesses all power in heaven and earth. Until you can state it, you do not sufficiently know your object. But when you can put the gist of what you would teach into a single sentence, you know precisely upon what you mean to fix your pupils' attention. And you can command attention, if you yourself are possessed by one idea.*

You should consider, secondly, how to take hold, how to fasten the interest of your class at the start, by making the children see that the theme has to do with them. Begin with something that they know and appreciate; with a point that has interested them in an earlier lesson, an illustration, or a principle that they can see has importance for them. And be sure that you take hold of the lesson in a decided way, not leaving your opening to chance, nor contenting yourself with a vague beginning.

In the third place, plan how you will go on. You wish to keep the attention that you have awakened until you have

* For much of what is said in this section acknowledgment is due to *How to Write* by Prof. Charles S. Baldwin, Ph.D.

gained your object for the day. To do this you must arrange the points that you wish to bring out in an orderly, coherent manner, so that one will lead on naturally to another. Material is here supplied, arranged, it is hoped, in a useful order, but to provide a ready-made lesson that could be taught automatically would be worse than useless. *Care has been taken to put the material in such a form that you must yourself think out the lesson.* Each paragraph, to be sure, sets forth one of the points to be taught, and an outline is suggested at the end of each lesson, its sentences corresponding to these paragraphs. This arrangement will help you in making your plan, but it will not provide a substitute for your thinking. It is worth while, and deeply interesting as well, to study for yourself how to marshal your material. The three chief things to be considered, then, in planning the lesson are: fixing the point, taking hold, and going on until the purpose of the day is fully attained.

It is also to be borne in mind that every truth brought before us in the Creed has a practical bearing on life. Applications are suggested below that may usefully be made, and you will wish to plan how to draw a moral effectively. Be clear in your own mind what application you will lead up to, and plan how to present it; but put it briefly. Children weary of long moralizings; but they often remember a moral lesson that is terse, and more often one that they deduce for themselves from a well-taught lesson.

Planning the lesson is much easier if you put your ideas down on paper than if you try to carry everything in your mind. You will be well repaid for your trouble if you make notes while studying the lesson of each important point just when you get hold of it. And in planning the lesson it is well worth while to write a sentence expressing each topic when it takes shape in your mind, just as you wrote at the start a sentence expressing the central theme. To be sure

the suggested outline gives you such sentences, but do not be satisfied with that. Frame for yourself such statements as will best convey what you find in these *Lessons* to the particular children whom you teach. If you can thus state your points clearly and briefly, you will be ready to arrange them in an effective order for teaching.

Making the Outline.—An outline that will insure clearness of arrangement and be a guide in class is essential. Even if you do not care to write down notes of your studies, and sentences expressing the topics of the lesson, at least make an outline to use in teaching. Write down, therefore, the title of the lesson, and under it the sentence in which you have stated for yourself the central theme. Then put down titles for the topics into which you divide the lesson, and arrange them in the order that you will use when you develop the lesson in class. Use a page of convenient size to keep before you while teaching, and put down the topics in such a way that they readily catch the eye, and your plan as a whole is represented graphically. To take lesson 1 as an example, you would make some such outline as follows, except that you would leave space under each topic to indicate how it is to be developed.

Faith. The Meaning of "I believe in."

I believe in God, because he showed his love toward us by sending his Son into the world.

What Christ's coming into the world has shown.

The purpose of Christ's coming.

Our response to God's love.

Faith necessary to salvation.

Faith dependent on willingness to obey God.

Faith like trust in persons.

Faith and life.

The topics are like guide-posts pointing the way to the one great theme summarized in the leading sentence, and each should suggest at a glance the development necessary to attain that end. Their arrangement should be such that the lesson will go on from point to point without letting the interest of the class flag. And, as the time for the day's work is limited, the outline should be so planned that the lesson will not stop short before the objective point for the day has been reached.

When you have thus made the framework for your lesson, consider how you will take hold of and develop each part. As you have thought out the lesson as a whole, so you should think out each topic. The manner of development must vary according to the subject and the class; but you will not go far wrong if you fix upon some good illustration to introduce each point, and plan to lead on from it by questions until you get from the children a statement that fairly sums up the topic. The illustrations and lines of development that you plan to use may be indicated in your outline as subtopics by a word or two for each. Having made the outline, the wise teacher will go over it again and again in order to come before the class with a message ready to deliver. A message that costs time and thought will secure attention, and truth that has been made the teacher's own will be taught with authority.

Preparing Questions.—You now have a plan for the structure to be built in class, and the material is ready in your mind for use. In just what way will you lay stone upon stone? How is the class to be questioned? Printed questions and answers have been purposely avoided in these lessons, because they lead so easily to mechanical recitations. If the children are to see what you try to teach, and are to express it for themselves, the questioning must draw out their thoughts, must start with what they know already,

and lead them on to what you wish them to know. You cannot, then, precisely formulate the questions in advance, and must leave yourself free to be guided by the way the subject develops in class. But if you know what you mean to teach, and try to put yourself in touch with the children, you may trust yourself to use a free and natural method of questioning.

To prepare for this, take your outline and consider what question you will begin to ask on each topic, what answers the class is likely to give, and how you will go on according as you find this opening or that. Plan to proceed rapidly and to take advantage of what the children know, if they show that they understand; or to repeat a point and bring it out more fully, if they do not understand it at first. Use your imagination and your knowledge of the individual children to foresee in what directions their thought may move; and plan how you will keep them in the path you mean to take, or bring them back when they wander off. Go over thus in your mind a variety of questions on each point; and prepare lines of questioning that will guide you, and yet not hinder a free, spontaneous development of the lesson. Then you will find, when you come to class, that questioning is not a dull routine, but is interesting both to you and the children.

The pupils' written answers should be made use of in class at the stages of the lesson where they will come in to the best advantage, and you should decide beforehand just when and how you will bring them in. Each question in the *Outline for Pupils* is closely related to some topic of the lesson given in these pages. Thus in lesson 1 the first four questions have to do with the first four paragraphs of that lesson in this book, and the fifth question, with the last paragraph but one. Naturally the answers to each question should be read when the topic to which they relate is

taught. And they will generally come in better after the oral questioning on the topic rather than before. For then, if the written answer is right, it fixes the thought in the child's mind; if it is wrong, the mistake will be evident, and can easily be corrected.

You will also wish to decide in advance when the children would best recite the text that they have to learn. This should usually come at the end of the lesson, and along with it they should recite the article of the Creed upon which the lesson bears. This will give opportunity for summing up the lesson, and for leaving in the children's minds a clear statement of the central theme which you have written down at the beginning of your outline.

Work in Class.—At each session there should be a brief review of previous work, then the lesson of the day, to which most of the hour should be given, and thirdly an explanation of what is to be done the following week. None of these three parts of the work in class should ever be neglected.

The review ought always to be carefully planned in advance, and should have the object both of fixing what has been learned before and of leading up to the subject of the day. Sometimes it is best to take up the salient points of the last lesson, as in lessons 2, 5, 17, or 31; sometimes, the main themes of several previous lessons in their bearing on that of the day, as in 7, 8, 25 or 29. It is well to make a brief but careful note in your outline of the points to be reviewed.

In teaching the lesson do not lecture to the children; bring out the points that you wish to make by means of questions. If you have a story to tell by way of illustration, tell it. But most things that you tell children go in one ear and out of the other. Only what you can get them to say for themselves are they at all likely to grasp; and even when

they say a thing, you must try to make sure that they grasp the idea, and are not merely repeating or imitating a phrase. Aim, therefore, to follow up the line of questions that you have prepared, and to *get the children to tell you* what you desire them to know.

The Bible passage ought not, as a rule, to be read over in class. It should be assumed that each child has done at least so much at home. If he has not, the advantage of doing it will be so evident that he will be inclined to prepare the next lesson better. The wise teacher will expend more energy in arousing a desire to do well next time than in scolding for past carelessness.

The class must be kept alive and interested. No effort in preparing or teaching the lesson is too great that will bring about this result. And to attain it, individuals must be reached. Should John's or Mary's attention wander, it must be arrested by a skillful question, an illustration, a well-told story, a picture, or any legitimate means that will not interrupt the development of the lesson.

For explaining the next week's lesson you should be sure to reserve some minutes before the session closes. Point out the theme of the next lesson and its connection with that of the day. Sketch very briefly the topics that will be taken up. Show what preparation the children are to make at home; and, if you foresee that any question of the *Outline* will be hard to answer, suggest how it is to be looked up or thought out. These matters deserve some previous thought, and it is worth while to add a memorandum of them to your outline.

The Pupil's Preparation.—Each pupil should have a Bible or a Prayer Book, an *Outline for Pupils* and a notebook. In preparing his lesson at home he should first notice carefully the title of the lesson, and read the text and the passage of Scripture, trying to see clearly their connection with the subject of the lesson. Then he should

write in his note-book answers to the questions of the *Outline*. And finally he should learn the text by heart. The questions are so chosen, as a rule, that the answer can be seen in the Bible passage itself, but some require a conclusion to be drawn from what has gone before. Each answer should be a complete sentence, not a mere phrase, which cannot be understood apart from the question. Most of the passages referred to may be found in the Prayer Book, and therefore either the Bible or the Prayer Book may be used in home preparation and in class. This is often a great convenience. Passages not found in the Prayer Book are used only in lessons, such as 18, for which several references are given, and may readily be assigned to pupils who have Bibles of their own. Where several references are given, lettered *a*, *b*, and so on, each pupil may be assigned one passage for home study. In this way the work will be lightened, and each group of pupils who have looked up a certain passage will have something of their own to contribute in class.

It may be thought that too much is expected of the children, and that it will be impossible to get them to do written work. But certainly an hour or two a week is a very modest requirement for religious studies, and that will suffice for what is here proposed. On the other hand, there is plenty to do for those who wish to be thorough and to work up their note-books more completely. You may fairly insist that every child who wishes to keep up with the class shall at least read the text and Bible passage, and write something in his note-book. Even though he writes only a line or two on the subject, there is this much gained, that he has read a portion of the Bible with the idea that it has some definite meaning for him. But a good proportion of pupils, it is found, will do much better; many will bring in creditable answers, and some will prepare really ad-

mirable and complete note-books. Do not be discouraged, if your pupils at first do only a little written work, but aim to make it soon a prominent feature. Take pains to look over the note-books and to encourage the children to do their written work well, for this will give evidence that some studying has been done at home. The superintendent and the rector can do much to increase the children's interest, too, by inspecting the note-books from time to time and by examining them at the end of the year.

Reviews and Tests.—An hour should be given up to a review at least four times in the year, after lessons 9, 22, 33 and 43. There should also be a general review at the very end, unless it is the custom of the school to have an examination which the children must pass before going on to another grade or subject. These reviews may be oral, and then the teacher ought to prepare a careful outline, and think out the lines of questioning to be taken up; but it is better in most cases to have written tests. The aim should be not only to fasten in the memory what has been learned, but also to give the class a more connected idea of the whole subject. The teacher should therefore pick out the salient features of the lessons reviewed, and aim to make the class see them as a coherent whole.

Whether the review is oral or written it is a good plan to have each child, besides going over the work to be reviewed, bring in a paper on some one of the themes taught. All may write on one subject, or better, a theme may be assigned to each. It is found that the children often do really good work of this kind, and that it increases their interest. These papers should be copied into the note-books, and be specially examined both by the teacher and by the superintendent or rector.

Experience shows that children will be interested and will study, if they see they are learning something definite

each day, and feel there is a purpose in the course. And it is found that time and pains spent in preparing lessons on religious truth are not wasted, if a simple and natural method of teaching is followed. Method, however, is only a way of imparting what the teacher himself knows and feels. He must study his subject, and to that study we now turn.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Religious Belief Natural.—There is in every normal person a capacity for religion, and all races of men have some belief in gods or in God. The tendency to be religious is as natural to man as are his tendencies toward acquiring knowledge, or toward art and music, or toward family and social life. Religion may take on low and degraded forms, and may then lead to immoral conduct, and find expression in superstition and impure worship. In this it resembles the efforts of savages toward a knowledge of nature, their use of magic instead of science, their rude attempts at art and music, and their imperfect forms of government. But religion, even in its feeblest and its most corrupt forms, bears witness to our capacity and instinctive tendency to feel after God. And in its true form, leading to the highest morality, and finding expression in the noblest worship, religion shows man at his best. The person who cares for the truth and loves the right craves after God even more insistently than the ignorant and dull. Man's most natural and most worthy longing is expressed when the Psalmist says: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God."—Ps. 42: 1, 2. And when the true knowledge of God is put before man, he responds with a pure and living faith. We ought in our teaching to count on this natural tendency of all to be religious, and appeal to it with confidence. Even though we meet with indifference, we may encourage ourselves by remembering that children

have the natural longing to know God even more strongly, perhaps, than their elders, and are capable of a pure and beautiful reverence when God is rightly made known to them.

Faith and Knowledge.—It is often said that faith or belief should be contrasted with knowledge. It is said that we know certain things to be true which we have heard and seen; and we believe certain things to be true about which we have been told on reliable authority, for example, that the Nile flows through Egypt, or that Washington was our first President. It is true enough that there is a contrast between what we believe as a matter of religious faith and what we perceive by the senses. And we do believe many things that we learn from others and cannot fully test for ourselves. None of us, probably, would have faith in God through Christ, if we had not been informed by other persons, whose knowledge is greater than ours, of the wonderful and beautiful things in nature through which the “eternal power and godhead” of our heavenly Father “are clearly seen”; and if we had not learned from the records of the Bible how God has made himself known in the history of the chosen people, in the Incarnation of our Lord, and in the founding of his Church. The great facts through which God is known we cannot observe, each one for himself; they are told us by competent observers or given by reliable history, especially by the Gospels. Very few of us would know of God and of the ways in which he has made himself known, if we had not been brought up in a Christian community and been instructed by the appointed teachers of the Church. So, too, we cannot observe by the senses, or accurately test, the manifestations of God’s love and power in our own lives and the lives of our neighbors; we cannot see or hear or touch, neither can we measure, the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, or the help that comes in the

Holy Communion; we cannot tell just what effect our prayers have; and we cannot say that the good we see in others has arisen in just such and such a way from Christian faith. Accordingly, it is true enough that we do not know religious truth in the same way that we know what we see and hear, and true enough that in certain important respects we are dependent upon authority for what we believe.

But to contrast faith and knowledge in this way is superficial, and does not really help us to understand what faith is. For religious belief is not the only sphere in which authority has a place. We have reliable scientific or historical knowledge of many matters that we have never tested for ourselves. For example, we may know of what elements water is composed, although we have not ourselves performed the appropriate chemical experiments; and we may know when America was discovered, although we did not sail with Columbus, and, indeed, may never have even looked up the evidence. We accept such facts on the authority of scientists and historians. Their statements can be proved, we are aware, by experiments in the one case, and by evidence in the other; but we cannot possibly make investigations in all the knowledge that we accept and use. We shall do well, therefore, not to take as the distinctive characteristic of faith the fact that we have to depend on authority for many truths that we cannot know at first hand. For, although authority has its important place in matters of religious belief, our knowledge of God is not thereby made less certain than it otherwise would be, or in the least inferior to what we know of nature and of history. The Church, no less than the scientific world, teaches what she does because it is true and can be verified. The great facts upon which our redemption depends rest upon the most solidly reliable evidence, namely, that which is given by the Gospel history.

Again, to contrast what we know by faith and what we perceive by the senses, as though our sense knowledge were the more certain, is profoundly untrue. Faith is not less, but more, reliable than our knowledge of things and events. The Christian believer is, if possible, more sure of God's love than of what his eyes and ears tell him; and in all his experience of life he endures and acts "as seeing him who is invisible." See also John xx. 29. Material things, which we perceive by the senses, are not more truly known than are our fellow-men, or right and wrong, or God. And the experience that the Christian has of God's providential care for him, of prayer answered, of moral and spiritual help in his life, and of the effects upon the characters of others that come from faith and the grace of God, is as certain and trustworthy an experience as that which can be more accurately tested and measured. And so we shall not arrive at an understanding of what faith is by pointing out these contrasts between faith and knowledge. We must seek the proper meaning of faith in another direction.

Faith like our Knowledge of Persons.—Faith implies a relation between persons; we cannot properly speak of faith in things. We may believe in, have faith in, various business men as honest and judicious, or in a physician as skillful and honorable. It is inappropriate to say that we believe in, have faith in, a clock's accuracy or the stability of a bridge. The meaning, therefore, of religious faith, by which the believer is saved, may be most truly as well as most readily explained, if we compare the relation in which we stand to God by faith with the relation in which we stand to human persons, whom we love, trust and obey. Faith means the use of our capacity for knowing God. The way in which we know him is most nearly comparable with the way in which we know our fellow-men.

To believe in, as we use the expression in the Creed, or to

have Christian faith, means to put our trust and confidence in a Person. To say "I believe in God" involves far more than merely to give assent to a proposition and accept it as true; it is to express our sense of relationship to our heavenly Father and our love for and trust in him. Faith is more than the use of our intellect, and implies that our feeling and especially our will are actively employed; it is the reaching out toward God of our whole nature, mind, heart and will all included; it means the activity of our whole personality in knowing God as our personal God. Consequently, if we would understand it, we shall do well to compare it with our knowledge of persons.

Our knowledge of other persons cannot be tested by exact experiments, or even by accurate observation extending to every part of their lives and every feature of their characters. In our practical life we have to act every day on faith in the uprightness and good-will toward us of friends and relatives; and the man who is suspicious and distrustful of those whom he ought to love and trust brings disaster upon himself. Many of the tragedies of everyday life turn upon such unwarranted distrust; and the great dramatists, the interpreters of human nature and its motives, have often represented its disastrous results, as in the case of Othello, allowing himself to become suspicious of Desdemona, or of Elsa, tempted to question Lohengrin as to his name and home. This last is in substance one of the oldest of human stories, and one of its forms is the Greek tale of Cupid and Psyche. Yes, we must trust our fellow-men. Indeed we often have to trust them in matters affecting our welfare and even our lives, when our direct knowledge of them is slight. This is the case, for example, when we send a letter by mail, or go on a railroad or steamboat journey. So it is in regard to the vastly more important matters that depend upon our faith in God. We have not

complete and proved knowledge concerning him, such that everything is as plain as that two and two make four. "We walk by faith, not by sight."—2 Cor. v. 7. And "now we know in part."—1 Cor. xiii. 12. But we have to act, we have to follow a plan of life that decides our character and destiny one way or the other. Just as the man is a fool and a failure who will do nothing for fear he cannot trust and depend upon other men, so the man who will not trust God loses his opportunity of spiritual life and well-being.

Our knowledge of persons, again, is gradually gained, and comes in a variety of ways; yet the final result may be such certain and reliable knowledge of a person's character, and such perfect trust in him and in his disposition toward us, that we will stake everything upon it, fortune, honor, life. We observe a person's manner and expression of face, his conversation, and his way of acting in little things, noticing whether or not he is intelligent, fair-minded, generous. So we get, perhaps unconsciously, an impression as to his capacity and character. Then we may have an opportunity to see how he acts in some crisis, how he faces danger, how he stands temptation, and whether or not he lives up to the highest requirements of friendship. The manifestation of his character in a thousand ways, some great, but most of them small in themselves, may in time give us entire confidence in him and establish intimate friendship. So our knowledge of God is given in many ways, most of them not absolutely conclusive in their manifestation of him; yet all lead us gradually to complete trust and faith.

Again, we can understand another person only when we are in sympathy with him and have a right will toward him. If we hate or dislike him, or if we act unfairly or unkindly toward him, we cannot get in touch with him. So faith

can arise only if the heart is right and the will devoted to God's service. We shall know of the truth concerning God only if we strive to do his will, and doing his will results in fuller knowledge of the truth. When we act upon so much of Christian truth as we know, we are in the way of learning that truth in full.

How God has Made Himself Known.—If faith may be likened to the knowledge that we have of persons, revelation, the process by which God has made himself known to us, may be likened in a measure to the way in which one human person makes himself known to his fellows.

A person is known to others by what he accomplishes. When we see a man's work, we can tell what kind of a man he is. A building, a book, a regiment implies a builder, an author, a commander; and each gives some indications regarding the person who made or molded it. So the world, beautiful, ordered according to exact laws of nature, developing from stage to stage until man with his mind and conscience appears and finds himself at home in it, implies a maker. "The living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is, . . . left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv. 15, 17. So St. Paul reasoned when he tried to persuade the people of Lystra to worship the one God only. And to the Athenians he spoke with the same purpose of "the God that made the world and all things therein," who "giveth to all life and breath and all things," as having made all men everywhere, "that they should seek after God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being."—Acts xvii. 24 to 29. See also Rom. i. 20. We may thus know of God from his world, and from the way in which it is suited

to our needs and supports our life. And so "by faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things that appear."—Heb. xi. 3.

In the second place, a person may be made known by his dealings with us in the affairs of life. And, so far as we can compare divine things with human, we may liken to this the revelation that God has made of himself through history. All history we ought to think of as under his guidance, and as giving us, therefore, some glimpses of him. But he is to be seen with special clearness in the history of his chosen people as recorded in the Old Testament. They were delivered from slavery in Egypt, and brought to the promised land through dangers that it seemed impossible to escape. They drove out stronger peoples, and in time they became a nation with a firm government and the most just of laws. The worship of Jehovah set forth his glory and righteousness, and the sacrifices taught the people the sinfulness of departing from his laws. From time to time the prophets arose to preach the will of God, to warn men that misery must result from wickedness and idolatry, or to foretell the splendor and happiness of a kingdom founded upon righteousness. More than this, the people of Israel experienced in their history the most striking proofs that their prosperity or misery depended upon their faithfulness to the one God and his law of righteousness. The Old Testament story turns again and again upon this, until finally the captivity almost destroyed the sinful and idolatrous nation, and a remnant were allowed to return to their land only when they repented and sought after God. Thus through the law, the sacrificial worship, the preaching of the prophets and the lessons of history, the people of Israel learned that there is one God, and that he is a God of righteousness. And so his dealings with them made him known to them,

as a man's nature and moral character are made known from his behaviour toward other men.

The Manifestation of God in Jesus Christ.—We know something of a person from his work and from his dealings with others; but we come to a true and full knowledge of him only when we can observe him personally face to face. In like manner we have in our Lord the complete revelation of the divine character and nature, for which all that went before prepared men. As we can understand who and what a person is when we see him before us, hear what he says and see what he does, so we can learn from the Gospel story who Jesus Christ is. He showed himself to his disciples and the apostles, whom he chose to be witnesses of him, face to face, as a man shows himself to his friends. They saw that he was sinless, that he was wise beyond any one they had ever seen or heard of, that he had powers such as no mere man has ever possessed, and that he used these powers only for the wisest purposes of healing and help. As they accompanied him day after day in close companionship, and saw his character and powers put to the test by all the difficulties of his great mission, they could not think that he was merely a man. They came to see that he was divine. And when they confessed their faith in him as the Son of God, he did not rebuke them, as any good man would have done who was only a man. He accepted their confession of faith, and showed them that he had come into the world in order that men might believe on him. When the end of his earthly life drew near, they saw him go forward with heroic courage, although he knew that the Cross was before him. They witnessed his sacrifice with its infinite forgiveness and love. Finally they were "witnesses of his resurrection."—Acts i. 8, 21, 22; ii. 32, etc. And they perceived that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."—Rom. i. 4.

There is no truth so profound as that which he came to reveal; he showed himself to men, in order that by seeing him we might "see the Father," and know that God is love. These truths seem plain to us only because we are familiar with the Gospel story; apart from that revelation we should still be feeling after him whom man cannot even by searching find out. "No man hath ever yet seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John i. 18. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."—Matt. xi. 27. And the love of God would be too glorious for our belief, if it were not made known in Christ. But because he appeared as man, his disciples could declare to all men concerning the Word of life "that which they saw with their eyes and their hands handled." "The life was manifested," St. John says accordingly, "and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."—1 John i. 2. See also Acts iv. 20.

How God is Known as One God in Three Persons.—To many people the Creed appears to be a set of doctrines that cannot be understood and are of no practical value. And the concise statement accepted and taught by the whole Church, that the one God is in three Persons, seems to them not only unintelligible and useless, but self-contradictory and therefore untrue. They imagine that the creeds were framed because some persons, doubtless well-meaning, had a desire to think out hard doctrines and make everybody else believe them. The mistake here arises from failing to notice that the doctrine of the Trinity is a necessary conclusion from observed facts. For consider how God made himself known as existing in three Persons although he is one God. He did not utter a voice from heaven to

tell us that this is true, nor did he send down a writing from heaven in which we might read that it is true; but each of the Persons of the Godhead was manifested through what he does for men. They are known, therefore, as having certain relations toward men, and as standing in the eternal relation of love to one another.

We saw that God the Father is made known through creation, in history and in the Old Testament revelation, just as truly as any human person can be known through his work and his dealings with us. Our Lord's disciples, accordingly, and all the Jews, held the belief in one God as the foundation principle of their religion. This their forefathers too had held for many generations so firmly that they had been willing to suffer all things for their belief in the one true God. Our Lord enforced this belief, and based all his teaching upon it. He spoke continually of the Father in heaven. He told his disciples that he had come forth from God, and was upon earth to do the Father's will. The effect of his life and teaching was to make the one God better known, so that men might believe in him not only as righteous and just, punishing those who do wrong, but also as the God of love, the Father who cares for every one of his children. Our Lord, therefore, made men understand more clearly than ever that God is One.

But those who knew our Lord saw from his perfect moral character, his wonderful teaching, his mighty works of love, and his rising from the dead, that he was truly God. And they saw that he was one Person, and the Father who had sent him, concerning whom he taught them, and to whom he prayed, was another Person.

Furthermore our Lord promised his disciples that, as he must soon leave the world and go to the Father, he would send the Comforter to take his place. And after our Lord's ascension the Holy Spirit, coming down upon the apostles,

showed his presence by the tongues of fire and the rushing mighty wind. When he had once come they knew that he was present among them, although he could not be seen, by the powers that he gave them. He manifested himself by enabling the apostles to heal the sick and raise the dead; and they knew themselves to be under his guidance in their missionary work, or in organizing the Church and managing its affairs. See Acts iv. 31, v. 1 to 17, viii. 29, x. 19, xi. 28, xiii. 2, xv. 28. And again the apostles and evangelists knew that the Holy Spirit was helping them to remember and to understand all that Christ had taught them. Thus they saw that the Holy Spirit is a real Person, and they knew what sort of a Person he was from what he did for them. Plainly, too, he was not the same Person as the Father, nor was he the same Person as their Lord Jesus Christ, with whom they had gone about while he was in the world. Thus they came to know that there is a third divine Person, and to have a definite belief concerning him.

But still they knew that there is but one God; and they could remember that our Lord had said, "I and the Father are one."—John x. 30. And they remembered that he had told them the Holy Spirit should not speak of himself; "he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."—John xvi. 13 to 16. And so out of the revelation of God in the Old Testament, of Christ in his life upon earth, and of the Holy Spirit in his wonderful workings, God made known to men that he is one God, but exists in three Persons. Thus we confess our faith in the Triune God not as a matter of strange and mysterious doctrine, but because we know from facts experienced by men that there are these three Persons and that each of them does something for us. The Father has created us, and he now preserves us. Our Lord by his death and resurrection redeemed us from sin, and now lives in heaven to plead for us. The Holy Spirit works to make all the

people of God holy. God therefore revealed himself in such a way that we can know and serve him. We speak of him in the Creed in such a way that what we say is understandable and practical. We state what God has done for men in times past, what he does for us now, what we and all persons can always depend upon him to do forever. Thus the dogmas of the Creed are not abstract definitions, but statements which have to do with God's actual relations to us, and with the eternal realities of the divine existence, which we know, in part at least, through the manifestation to men of each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

Confession of Faith in the Triune God.—Our Lord commanded his apostles to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—Matt. xxviii. 19. It was their duty, for one thing, to make known to all men the knowledge of God that had been given to them. This knowledge was of God the Father, in whom they had always believed, and whom their Master had fully revealed to them; of God the Son, with whom they had companied during his life on earth, and whose appointed witnesses and ambassadors they were; and of the Holy Spirit, whose work among them they constantly experienced. In a wonderfully simple and effective way our Lord's command as to Baptism in the threefold Name kept before his Church the fundamental truths of the Fatherhood of God, the redemptive work of the Son of God and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. These first things necessarily have the foremost place so long as membership in Christ's Church is given through Baptism. For all who are baptized must naturally be taught to confess their faith in the three Persons in whose name they are baptized, and so must be taught who these three Persons are, and what divine work each performs as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. This leads us back continually to

the revelation of God recorded in the Bible, and also keeps the truth before us that our religion is essentially a personal relation to our personal God.

Now the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds are historically a growth from the words used in Baptism, as is seen from a comparative study of the early forms of the Apostles' Creed and of the creeds used in early times in the Eastern Church. In different times and in different parts of the Church the Creed has varied in details, but all its forms have the threefold structure that we notice in it now; it has always been a confession of faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; or, as Dr. Sanday says, "the Creed is essentially trinitarian." The Nicene Creed is only a fuller, more explicit statement of what is found in the simpler forms; and it was framed, not from any desire for elaborate statements of doctrine, but from the need that arose to preserve the original faith of Christians when various heresies threatened its corruption.

That the Creed grew naturally out of the words used from the first in Baptism is evident if we consider the purpose that it served from early times. This was twofold; it supplied a brief outline for the instruction of those who were to be baptized, and a form for their confession of faith at the time of their Baptism; by means of it they could know what they accepted in becoming Christians, and could confess what they believed. This suggests, it may be remarked in passing, that the Creed is suited to-day as well as in early times to be used as an outline for instruction. But it is especially to be noticed that the purpose and use of the Creed, its connection with the words of Baptism, and its emphasis upon belief in the three Persons of the Trinity as summing up the revelation of God to men, all indicate that it is, rightly understood, not a dry formula but the earnest confession of living faith in a personal God.

The Bible and the Creed.—Both the Bible and the Creed set forth the same truths concerning the Triune God and our dependence upon him; both were gradually formed by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and both were intended to meet the needs of believers. In what relation to each other do they stand? The Creed, we have seen, served as an outline of instruction and a brief confession of faith. The Gospels, to take them as the most important instance, gave to believers, who had already been taught the first principles of Christianity, a fuller knowledge concerning the life and teachings of the Master. And so it must always be. Without the Creed, a student of the Bible may lose his way in the multitude of details, and miss the truth. Without the Bible, the Creed would hardly be intelligible, and could have little interest for us. The Creed may be compared to the comprehensive view of a city or countryside that we get from a high building or hill; the Bible, to the nearer glimpses we have of human homes when we see them close at hand. The Creed is the Gospel in brief, a summary of the truths written large in the Scriptures. Yet its doctrines are as full of life and meaning as the Gospels themselves, provided we understand them in the light of the Gospel story. When an artist paints a picture, he first sketches, with charcoal, outlines of the figures that are to appear in the finished painting; and in doing this he is guided by the anatomical structure of the men or animals that are to be represented. Such an outline we have in the Creed, since it rightly analyzes the subject-matter of our faith. But the bare sketch is no picture; the artist must fill in his canvas with colors presenting the living reality as it meets the eye. So when we add to the Creed the details and color that the Bible supplies, our outline becomes as true and beautiful a picture as we can hope to make of him whose glory we can at the best image forth but dimly.

Limitations of our Knowledge of God.—What God has revealed is in its extent wisely adapted to our needs rather than to our wishes. What we need to know of God and of his will for the practical guidance of our conduct and the upbuilding of our spiritual life, he has made known to us. Many things to be sure, that our curiosity might desire to have revealed, have been hidden; but these, if known, would not help us in living aright. For example, we might naturally wish to know more about friends who have died; but we know that they are safe in God's keeping, and that they shall rise again. To learn about the conditions of their life in the world beyond would not help us more in doing our duty than does the knowledge we already have that our own future depends upon a faith that works out into righteousness.

If, then, God's revelation has limits, we ought never to speak as though we possessed complete and infallible knowledge upon every question that arises. In teaching it is not always easy to say, "I don't know," and we are often tempted to add to what is revealed some opinion of our own or of other men's making. This has always been a fruitful source of religious strife, and a cause of stumbling to many who, seeking eternal truths, are given trivial and useless opinions. We ought never to be ashamed to say that we are not wise above what is revealed. And if we show the children that the reason why we cannot answer some question is because no answer is given in the Bible, we shall not lose ground with them; and we shall put them on their guard against "erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." When such a question is asked, we should point out that knowing the answer would not help us in doing right, and should also remind the children of our weakness and ignorance in comparison with the majesty and wisdom of God.

Faith and Salvation.—Sometimes the Creed is spoken of as being a form of words that it is the bounden duty of everyone to accept under pain of everlasting punishment. When the matter is so put, there is often a revolt from all forms and from every requirement to believe one thing more than another. We are then told that a person's opinions can have no bearing on his character in God's sight; only his actions and intentions can be supposed to count in any just judgment. Now if the Creed were nothing more than a collection of certain words, there could hardly be any obligation to accept it. But it is not a mere outward form; it expresses our inner convictions concerning our God. And so, although it might be hard enough to see how a form of words could have anything to do with salvation, we attach the most serious importance to the Creed as the outward expression of an inward and living faith. The necessity of faith, if we are to be saved, is strongly emphasized by our Lord and his apostles. Faith is the foundation of Christianity and of the life of the individual Christian. The Creed is the natural expression of our faith. It is therefore reasonable and right that every person at Baptism should be required to accept the Creed; for in so doing he simply takes upon himself an obligation to believe what is true, just as in promising to keep God's Commandments he takes an obligation to do what is right.

Creed and Character.—The knowledge and love of God go together; and from them springs that willing service which is perfect freedom. In teaching the Creed, therefore, we should constantly aim to show its bearing on conduct. Faith, if it is true faith, is bound to work out into a moral life, knowledge of the truth guides us in living aright, and to set the mind on God and all his goodness toward us supplies the highest motive to holiness. But many who know the great Christian truths with their minds, do not lay hold

of them in such a way that their affections are kindled, and their conduct influenced and guided. For example, they accept with their minds the truth that all the baptized are one body in Christ, one communion and fellowship of the saints; but they fail to take this truth to heart, and to see that, since all Christians are thus members one of another, they ought to treat one another as brothers. Or they accept the communion of saints as meaning that all, whether living or dead, are one communion and fellowship, so that no real barrier separates us from our loved ones asleep in Jesus; but they miss the comfort and the love toward God that this truth brings to the heart, and the incentive to purer living that comes when it is pondered upon. It is therefore our duty to show the children not only what they ought to believe, but also the effect that this belief should have on their feeling and their conduct. We ought to give them a heart as well as a head knowledge of Christian truth.

Again, a great many people thoroughly believe that the Christian way of living is right, but condemn doctrine and creed as unnecessary additions to the original purity of Christianity, and as harmful to character through turning men's attention away from their moral duty. If we show the children how Christian truth is the key to right living, and how each article of the Creed has a meaning for life and a place in the upbuilding of well-rounded character, they will not in later years fall into this mistake. If we teach them that belief is meant to be acted upon, they will come to see that intelligent faith is the only secure foundation for morality.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

At the first meeting of the class two things ought to be made clear: the aim of the course, and the method of study. The explanation of these matters is no less important than the teaching of the lessons themselves, and will do much, if effectively presented, to arouse the children's interest.

The aim of the course is to explain and illustrate the Creed by the Scriptures. The truths briefly stated in the Creed are the deepest and most important that we can try to learn, helping us to know God better as our personal God. See page 1 of this book. These truths all have a practical bearing on our conduct. See pages 31, 32. The Creed is a summary of the Gospel story, a brief statement of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ; and as this is the central theme of our course, the Creed gives us a guiding outline for the year. Fuller knowledge of this great theme is given us by the Bible, from which we learn about God's revelation of himself to us and our duty toward him. Therefore we take some one truth of the Creed as our topic for each Sunday, and try to learn about it more fully from a text and a passage of the Bible. See pages vi. and 29.

The foundation of the children's study is a knowledge of the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, together with the Catechism answer, "First, I learn to believe in," etc. The pupils ought to know these by heart, and be ready to repeat them at any time through the year, inasmuch as the Creeds

give the sum and substance of our course. The method of studying the Bible lesson for each Sunday is explained on pages 11, 12 above and on page 5 of the *Outline for Pupils*. You should make sure that the children understand from several examples just what they are to do; first to notice carefully the topic of the lesson, then to read the text and the Bible passage, then to write answers in their note-books, and finally to learn the text by heart. You will need to see also that they know how to find in their Bibles or Prayer Books the passages of Scripture to which reference is made in the *Outline*.

The next lesson aims to show what faith is, what we mean when we say at the beginning of our Creed, "I believe in." The Bible passage sets forth God's love, made manifest in his sending his Son to save us. Faith arises in our hearts in response to his divine love. Notice that questions 2, 3 and 4 of the *Outline* may be answered directly from the Bible passage, and 1 from a general knowledge of the Gospel story; and that the last question requires a little reflection.

LESSON 1

FAITH. THE MEANING OF "I BELIEVE IN"

Text, St. John i. 12. *Bible lesson*, St. John iii. 16 to 22—
Gospel for Monday in Whitsun-week.

The wonderful love of God in giving his only Son for us is our first thought. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."—Rom. viii. 32. And our Saviour, carrying out his Father's will, came into the world; lived as a man among men, that he might make himself and the Father known to us, and might show us our duty by teaching and example; died for our sins; and rose again that we might have

eternal life. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 John iv. 10.

This love was shown in order that we may believe and be saved. Our Lord came for that purpose, and not in order to bring us into condemnation; although condemnation necessarily comes upon those who wilfully reject him. His coming brought us salvation, because eternal life is found in knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent (John xvii. 3); because he taught us how to live so as to be fit for eternal happiness; because his death has taken away our sins; because his rising from the dead has brought us eternal life. Furthermore, there is in his love a wonderful power of arousing the faith and love of those who learn about him. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," he said, "will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 32. In this he spoke of his crucifixion for our sins, and the power of his self-sacrificing love to arouse faith and love and service. How his love teaches men to love him is continually being shown in Christian experience. There are countless examples of men and women being converted from sin and built up into holiness through giving heed to our Saviour's redeeming love. (Some particular examples should be given in the lesson.) God's purpose, therefore, in sending his Son into the world was that all men might, if they would, believe and be saved. It is his will that his love, thus shown, should draw us from indifference and hardness to faith, and from sin to righteousness.

God's wonderful love in giving his Son, and his gracious purpose of saving us sinners, put upon us the responsibility of believing in and serving him, or of rejecting him. Faith and love and right living cannot be a matter of compulsion; they must depend upon our free response to God's goodness and love and righteousness. We are not forced to

believe in, trust and love our parents and friends; we can, if we choose, be hard and ungrateful, unloving and disobedient. But this is in the highest degree both foolish and wicked. In like manner an appeal is made to our minds and hearts by the love of God manifested in Jesus Christ, and we are morally bound to give the free response of faith.

If we heed this appeal we are saved, as God purposes that we shall be; if we neglect it, we must suffer loss and even condemnation (verse 18). If we will not have light, or think light is not worth having, we must lose its benefits. Sometimes a boy is careless about the opportunities of school, because he thinks it will not matter much to him later whether he is ignorant or well educated. Sometimes a man fails to make the most of himself, because he does not rightly understand what the world is like; he does not see his real opportunities, and he imagines that all sorts of impossible plans will work. Sometimes a person in danger so acts, or fails to act, that great injury to himself results, because he misjudges the circumstances. (Particular instances should be used in class.) There is no use in pretending that things are otherwise than they really are. "Sin ruins, the devil kills, and the world corrupts, with the same undeviating regularity as that with which fire burns, or water drowns, or poison kills." If we choose to think otherwise, we must suffer the consequences. So, if we neglect to heed the appeal of God's love in Christ, we shall miss the knowledge and love of God, on which our true well-being depends, and must suffer the loss due to our own folly. Christ came into the world to save us, and if we do not believe in him we act as shipwrecked sailors might, if they would not trust themselves to the lifesavers, and stayed on a ship that was going to pieces. The condemnation of the person who refuses to believe is in no way arbitrary or malignant. It is

the natural and right working out of the consequences that follow from his own decision.

Again, a person's moral character has much to do with his accepting or rejecting Christ. Too many reject him because they are evil-doers; to accept him would bring their conduct to a searching test, and require them to give up the evil that they love. On the other hand, a person who desires to do right welcomes the knowledge of God, and is fitted to know and love him by willing to do his will. See page 20.

"I believe in," as we use that expression in the Creed, denotes, then, the living faith that arises in the Christian's heart in response to the love of God. We can best understand it by comparing it with what we mean when we say "I believe in" some person whom we know and trust. A child believes in his father and mother. He is sure of their love, he is confident that what they tell him is true, and he knows that it is right to obey them. His belief in them arises from his experience of their love and care for him, to which he responds. So in the Creed "I believe in" means to have faith, trust and confidence in God as a Person who loves us, who has told us all we need to know about himself, and whom we cheerfully desire to serve. It means far more than simply to say that we are willing to accept certain statements about God as true. It expresses the conviction of personal religion, our sense of relationship to our heavenly Father, and our trust in him. This is indicated by the form of expression. We can believe any truth, even though it is unimportant or does not concern our welfare; we believe *in* some person to whom we give our confidence. And we say "*I* believe," even when we say the Creed all together, because the singular pronoun emphasizes the personal, real and definite faith in each one of us that is called forth by God's love for each. Everyone must have faith in God for himself, just as he must feel for himself, or act, when he is responsible,

of his own free will. God desires that each of us one by one should truly believe in him through Jesus Christ whom he has sent. And to as many as receive his only-begotten Son he gives "power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

If we have a true and living faith, we act upon it. Suppose a child in a burning house is told by his father to save himself by jumping into the net that the firemen are holding below; if he trusts his father, he makes the leap. So we endeavor to act in all things, "as seeing him who is invisible."

In sending his Son into the world God manifested his love for us.

God's purpose in sending his Son was to bring salvation within the reach of us all.

This wonderful love and this gracious purpose claim from us the response of faith.

Our salvation justly depends upon our believing in God the Father through Christ.

We can have faith only if we try to do God's will.

The living faith that arises in response to God's love may be likened best to the trust that we have in persons.

Faith, if it is true faith, will show itself in a good life.

The next lesson reminds us of our duty to confess what we believe, both in words and in our manner of living; and shows us why we have the form of words that we call the Creed. The first question in the *Outline* may be answered from the text; the second from Romans x. See that the children know where to find the Epistle for St. Andrew's Day. The third question may be looked up in the third answer in the Catechism, and the last only needs a little thought.

LESSON 2

CONFESSING THE FAITH

Review. God sent his Son into the world and showed his love for us. God's purpose in this was that we should be saved. We ought to give the response of faith. Our faith in God may be likened to the trust that we have in persons whom we know and love.

Text, St. Matt. x. 32, 33. *Bible lesson*, Rom. x. 9 to 12—first part of Epistle for St. Andrew's Day.

If we have the living faith that is called forth by the love of God toward us, we ought to put it into words and make it appear in our conduct; for it is right to express what we feel, and to act in accordance with the truth that we know. This is what our Lord requires of us, if we are to be acknowledged by him at the last day. And St. Paul tells us that the outward confession of Jesus as Lord is necessary for salvation, no less than inward belief. For the power of Christ to save us from sin and to give newness of life lies in these two facts: that he is Lord, the divine Son of God; and that he has triumphed over death. We must therefore believe inwardly in him, and outwardly confess him, as our risen Lord. Accordingly "the beginning of the Christian life has two sides: internally it is the change of heart which faith implies, and this leads to righteousness, the position of acceptance before God; externally it implies the confession of Christ crucified, and this puts a man into the path by which in the end he attains salvation" (Sanday and Headlam, *Commentary on Romans*, x. 10). And so, we may say, outward confession is of moral and spiritual importance, because, as we are free agents upon whom God does not force his benefits, we must ourselves lay hold upon the truth

revealed in Jesus Christ, and by our own open confession of it allow it to have effect in forming the characters of ourselves and others. See also 1 John iv. 15.

On this principle our Lord dealt with people while he was upon the earth. When he healed those who needed his help and had faith in him, he required them to say that they acknowledged him and relied upon him for help. See, for example: Luke xviii. 35 to end, in Gospel for Quinquagesima; Matt. viii. 2, in Gospel for Third Sunday after Epiphany; Luke xvii. 12, in Gospel for Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity. In like manner the disciples put their faith into words. For example: St. John the Baptist, St. Peter and St. Thomas. See John i. 34; Matt. xvi. 16, in Gospel for St. Peter's Day; John xx. 28, in Gospel for St. Thomas's Day. So again, St. Paul bids St. Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. i. 13.

The Church has always put her faith into words. The Apostles' Creed has come down to us almost from the times of the apostles; it is so called because it teaches and confesses what the apostles believed and taught; and it sets forth in a few words the sum of their teaching as we find it in the New Testament. The Nicene Creed was drawn up in 325 and 381 A.D. by councils of bishops representing all parts of the Church. It contains the same truths as the Apostles' Creed only more fully expressed. Both these forms of the Creed have been used constantly in all parts of the Church throughout the world. Now in the Creed we use the singular pronoun, and say, "I believe in," because each one of us must have faith in God for himself, as we saw in our last lesson. But we recite our Creed all together, because truth is always one and the same; the teaching of the prophets, of Christ and of his apostles is one, and this true teaching is summed up in the Creed, which the Church in

all countries and ages holds as one, and confesses with united voice.

In forming and using the Creeds the Church has not invented doctrines. She has simply put into brief and simple words the truths that God has made known to men concerning himself. In the Bible we have the story in detail of God's dealings with men; the Creed helps us to understand the Bible by showing us what its main truths are, much as the analysis of a book helps us to grasp the principal thoughts that it contains. The Creed, therefore, cannot change or have new doctrines added, since it can state only those truths that follow from the facts recorded in the Bible. See the eighth and sixth Articles of Religion.

In saying the Creed we confess our Lord, through whom God the Father is made known, and the Holy Spirit is given. The Creed has been likened to a compass, by which the ship of salvation, the Church, is guided aright, because it points always to Christ. We have only to glance at it to see that the greater part is about what our Lord has done for our salvation; and so, when the Sponsors say for the child that he believes "all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed," they do not promise anything else than that he will "confess the faith of Christ crucified." To be sure, the Creed is made up of little parts, which we say one by one with slight pauses between. These are indicated in the Prayer Book by capital letters. They are called "articles" from *articulum*, a little joint of the body. Each of them states some particular doctrine. But the articles make up one body of truth, which all belongs together. We cannot think of the Creed as a lot of disjointed fragments, without missing its real meaning as an expression of personal faith in our God. We are reminded of this by the phrase, "the Christian faith." In the Bible "the faith" is used to mean what is believed. Thus St. Jude says,

"earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." See also Ephes. iv. 4 to 7, 1 Tim. iii. 9 and iv. 1. So "the faith" or "the Christian faith," meaning the harmonious body of truth concerning our God that is summed up in the Creed, corresponds with the word "faith," meaning our personal belief and trust in God.

At Baptism the child is signed "with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world and the devil." An old name for the Creed was *symbolum*, which meant, before it was used for the Creed, the oath which soldiers took when they enlisted. It may remind us that the Creed binds all Christians together in one army; that men have fought for the faith (for example, the crusaders), and martyrs have died; and that we have to contend for the faith. This we can do, not by disputing about it, but by acknowledging that we believe, and by living in accordance with our belief. There is often a real temptation to be ashamed of our Lord and to care more for the opinions of our acquaintances than for him. But if we ever pretend that we do not care about him, or are silent when our silence makes us seem indifferent, we are cowards instead of faithful soldiers. If we are ever ashamed of doing right and of showing that we try to live in the way that Christ taught, we desert his banner. This is even more contemptible than to be ashamed of parents and benefactors, and to deny them (like Tito in *Romola*); or to be ashamed of our country and to desert the flag. We shall deserve to hear our Lord say, "I know you not." But we can encourage ourselves to manful confession of the faith in word and deed by considering the brave example of saints and martyrs. See for instance 2 Tim. i. 12, iv. 7, 8. And there stand always before us our Lord's promise to acknowledge those who confess him and his warning to those who deny him.

We must confess our Lord, if we would have him acknowledge us.

He required his disciples to give expression to their faith.

The Church has always put her faith into words in the Creeds.

The Creed is an outline of the truths about God made known by him and recorded in the Bible.

The Creed with all its articles is simply an acknowledgment of God in Christ.

To confess Christ means not only to say the Creed, but never to be ashamed of him or of living as he commands.

The next lesson reminds us that the faith which we confess is in the Holy Trinity. Into this faith we were each of us baptized according to our Lord's command to his apostles. We believe, therefore, in the three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three Persons are one God. The first two questions of the *Outline* may be answered from the Bible passage. See that the children know where to find it in the Prayer Book, on page 525 of the standard editions. The third question requires a simple conclusion to be drawn from the previous answers. Questions 4, 5 and 6 may be answered from the Creeds. And the last question requires a little thought on the apparent contradiction between our belief in the three divine Persons and the commandment to have one God only.

LESSON 3

THE HOLY TRINITY, THREE PERSONS, ONE GOD

Review. We have faith in God because of the love that he has shown toward us. This faith we ought to express. We put it into words, as our Lord would have us do; and into the words of the Creed, as his Church has done so long.

And we should express our faith not only in words, but by living as Christ's soldiers and servants.

Text, Ephes. iv. 5, 6. *Bible lesson*, St. Matt. xxviii. 18 to end—third Gospel at the Consecration of a Bishop.

Each of us has been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, after promising, either for himself or by his sponsors, that he would believe all the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed. See pages 248 and 262 of the Prayer Book, standard editions. There is, accordingly, a close connection between Baptism, by which persons are made Christians, and a confession of faith in the Holy Trinity.

This connection goes back to the command of our Lord himself concerning Baptism. After his mighty resurrection, when all authority was given unto him in heaven and in earth, he commanded his apostles to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Consequently, wherever Christian missionaries have gone, whenever members have been added to Christ's Church, Baptism has been administered with the words that our Lord appointed. Now it is evidently right that anyone who desires to be baptized should have a belief corresponding to those solemn words. It is right that a candidate for Baptism should confess his faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And it is right that he should be taught about these three Persons, and what each of them does for us. Therefore the Christian creed must be simply an expansion of the three-fold Name. Our creed grew out of our Lord's words, because a form was needed which candidates for Baptism could use in confessing their faith; and because an outline was needed for teaching the truths that Baptism implies.

This becomes plainer when we notice that the Apostles'

Creed is divided into three paragraphs concerning the three divine Persons; and that the Nicene Creed, which is simply a fuller statement, has three corresponding paragraphs. All the articles of our belief, though they make up one body of truth, divide into three parts, telling of the Persons into whose Name we were baptized. And so, in answer to the question of the Catechism, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?" we say, "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world; secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind; thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God." The very structure of the creeds, then, follows the words used in Baptism, which our Lord himself prescribed.

It is evident that everyone who is baptized rightly believes in the three divine Persons. But we must never forget that we do not believe in three gods, but in one God. This first principle, that God is one, he impressed upon men by the teaching and revelation of centuries, which is recorded in the Old Testament, before he made himself known as the triune God. Of the unity of God the next lessons will speak more fully, but the matter is summed up in the First Commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." The unity of God is the very foundation of all true religion. Whoever does not believe that God is one, falls into the errors of the heathen with their many gods and idols. But the doctrine of the Trinity emphasizes the truth that God is one. We hold to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all."

How can there be one only God, and yet three divine Persons? We must expect to find this hard to understand, since the Almighty is infinitely greater than we, and we cannot comprehend him; but we can understand in part, and can know him so far as he reveals himself to us. There is, at

least, no direct contradiction in the doctrine, "Three in One and One in Three," as though we said, one God is three Gods or three Persons are one Person. What we believe is that "in the one true God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are yet only one God." If, then, there is no real contradiction, there is no reason why we should not believe, even though we cannot fully understand. For there are many things, which we cannot comprehend or explain, that we know to be true. Thus sunlight has rays of light and of heat, and the actinic rays, which print a photograph. All three are distinct, and each has its own particular effects. For instance, heat rays may injure a film; only the actinic rays can make a picture. Yet the sunlight is one. Or, again, to take a different comparison, each of us knows, feels, wills, and there is a distinction in these mental powers; yet each of us is one individual. These analogies must not be pressed too far, but they show that we can know some things which we cannot fully understand, and that apparent contradictions do not disprove what we have good reason to accept as true.

That we have firm grounds for believing in one God in three Persons will appear more fully as we study, in the following lessons, the revelation that God has given of himself. The lessons are arranged in three divisions, and we aim to study about each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and to see that each is made known by what he does for us, in creating, redeeming and sanctifying. When we come to the end of our course and have learned about the revelation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we shall take up once more the subject of the Holy Trinity. For when we have seen how each of the Persons is made known to us, and why we are certain that God is one, we shall be in a position to understand better how these truths, contradictory at first sight, are really harmonious. We

shall see that "the doctrine of the Trinity is only the putting into such words as we can utter of what was disclosed about God when he came near to men in the appearing of Christ and the mission of the Holy Spirit" (Gore, *The Creed of the Christian*, p. 25).

We prize the doctrine of the Trinity because it assures us that God is love. Suppose one of us lived apart from everyone else; he could not fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, because there would be no one with whom he could have any relations. So, if God were one Person, he would not be eternally and essentially love. But since there are the eternal distinctions of the Persons in the Godhead, there is the eternal relation of love among them. Therefore God's very nature is love, and this the doctrine of the Trinity helps us to see.

Faith in the Holy Trinity is confessed by everyone who is baptized.

The confession of this faith is bound up with Baptism in consequence of our Lord's own command.

The structure of the Creed follows the form of words that our Lord appointed to be used in Baptism.

Faith in the Holy Trinity emphasizes the truth that there is one only God.

This doctrine cannot be fully understood, but it is not self-contradictory.

We can understand it better by studying some of the ways in which the three divine Persons are revealed.

The doctrine of the Trinity means that God is love.

The next lesson takes up our study about the First Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, and considers how he is revealed to us through nature, that is, the heavens and earth with all the wonderful and beautiful things they contain.

GOD THE FATHER

First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

LESSON 4

ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Review. Our confession of faith in the Holy Trinity is required by our Lord's command about Baptism. The doctrine of the Trinity emphasizes the truth that God is one, as well as the truth that there are three divine Persons. We can understand this better by studying the revelation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Text, Psalm 19: 1. *Bible lesson*, Psalm 104: 1 to 25.

When you have been in a beautiful wood, where the trees and flowers were even more lovely than in the finest park, you have said to yourself, perhaps, This is God's own garden; man could not plant a garden like that. If you have been in high mountains, and have looked over the peaks and ranges until your sight could reach no farther, you have felt awe, almost fear, at the vastness; and the thought has come to you, How glorious is the Maker of the mountains! So when you have seen the ocean stretching beyond the horizon, and the surf beating on the shore so mightily that the strongest man would be its plaything, you have felt the greatness of him to whom the sea is a very little thing. Or on a bright day in the country, when the sunlight and wind have made

you open your mouth and draw in your breath because it is so good to be alive, you have felt how glorious the Creator is who has made this beautiful world. And most impressive of all is the sky on a clear dark night, when the stars are past counting, and each world is more beautiful than a gem.

When we stop to think about all the wonderful things in nature, our thoughts turn to the Creator even more than when we simply look at his works and enjoy them. For whenever we see things happen, we think that some cause is at work. Whether a happening is unusual and striking, such as an earthquake, or usual, like the rising and setting of the sun and the growth of grain, we say there is some cause for it. That cause had some other cause in its turn, and so on as far back as our thoughts can go. Thus we may trace back a loaf of bread to flour, to wheat, to earth and sun and rain. But back of all is the great Cause, the Creator, upon whom all things depend. We do not deny that each event has its natural cause; for example, that an earthquake is due to the shrinking of the earth and the settling of its crust. But we do believe that God's power is behind all things, and that nature is as we find it, not because things just happened of themselves, but because God made them so.

And when we reflect on the beauty and order of all things, and consider how the stars move in their courses so regularly, how the earth is fitted to be the home of men and animals, the air of birds, and the sea of fishes, how these all are suited to their place in nature, we are impelled to think that there is a supreme Architect who has designed the natural world. Especially do we so think when we consider how the creatures now living have descended from others, their forms and habits changing to suit their surroundings, and how the history of nature shows that all things work out toward higher developments, the lower forms of life evolve into more complex, and man is the crown of all.

That nature speaks to us of God, some of the Psalms teach most beautifully. Thus our Bible lesson gives a glorious description of the natural world as being a revelation of the incomparable majesty of God. (The latter part of the psalm has been omitted from the lesson for the sake of brevity, but may well be used in class if time allows. Only such points will be brought out here as seem best suited for children; the teacher, however, will find it useful to study the whole psalm in Dr. Kirkpatrick's commentary on the Psalms, to which acknowledgment is due for much that follows.) The psalmist meditates on the power, wisdom and goodness that are manifested in God's creation and maintenance of the world. In part, as in verses 5 to 10, he thinks of the process of creation, but chiefly of the present order of the world and its continuous preservation by the will of the good God. He did not make the world only to leave it to itself, but constantly sustains it by his indwelling presence. The first thought, in verses 1 to 5, is that the forces of nature are an expression of God's almighty power. Light may be called the garment of God; like a robe it reveals, even while concealing him. The vault of heaven he has stretched out as easily as a man might pitch his tent. The storm cloud and the tempest are symbols of his coming; he controls the thunderstorm and the cyclone as easily as a driver his chariot, and when they approach we feel his tremendous power. Then follows, in verses 5 to 10, a brief description of the creation of sea and land. God established the earth; he covered it with waters, so that even the hills were submerged; and then at his command, mighty as though his voice were thunder, the waters fled away from the land, and are confined to the boundaries of ocean. Verses 10 to 13 tell us that God made the springs and streams, providing water for beast and bird. And verses 13 to 16, that he sends rain, causing the ground to bring forth grass for the cattle,

and wine, oil and bread for man. Then we are reminded (verses 16 to 19) that he provides for the birds and beasts, so that each has its suitable dwelling-place, as the stork in the fir trees, the wild goat in the hills, and the little coney in the rocks. (The coney is an animal not unlike a prairie-dog in appearance, which lives in holes in the rocks, where it makes its nest and conceals its young, and hides on the least alarm.) Furthermore, as verses 19 to 24 tell us, God has appointed the regular changes of the moon, which mark periods of time and the proper seasons for festivals; and has made the sun to go unfaillingly on its daily course, so that night and day serve for the wild beasts and for man. In short, all the manifold works of God show forth his wisdom. Cp. Pss. 95: 3 to 7, 148: 3 to 7.

Thus both nature and the Scriptures tell us that all things have been made by a wise and kind Creator, and that his works show forth his almighty power and goodness. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." This we should have in mind when we confess our faith in the "Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." When we say that he is Almighty, we mean that he has the power to do everything, and nothing can resist him; but that he will and can do nothing that is evil and contrary to his own nature. "He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself."—2 Tim. ii. 13. And when we add that he is the Maker "of all things visible and invisible," we mean that not only what we see, but also what we cannot see and understand, is in his power. No one then ought to have any foolish superstitions or fears, as about luck or magic or ghosts. We depend upon God, and on him only, for all that we have and are; and this ought to be so real to us that we are truly thankful for "our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life."

The beauty and vastness of nature speak to us of a Creator. The order of nature implies one great Cause.

The fitness of the world for living creatures suggests that there is a supreme Architect.

That all the manifold works of nature show forth the power and wisdom of God is the teaching of the Psalms.

We ought to feel with thankfulness our dependence on the Almighty Creator.

The next lesson emphasizes the truth that there is one only God, and false gods are nothing. This is taught to men through what God's chosen people experienced in their history. We study, therefore, some incidents in the story of their deliverance from Egypt and of their winning the promised land. If some of the pupils are willing to do more than the required lesson, let them each read a Bible story illustrating God's dealings with his people; e. g., Exod. iii., Ps. 105: 23 to 39, Exod. xiv., Josh. vi. 1 to 22, or viii. 1 to 23.

LESSON 5

ONE GOD

Review. God's power and wisdom are revealed in nature, as we are told in Psalm 104.

Text, Deut. vi. 4, 5. *Bible lesson,* Psalm 135.

Nature not only speaks to us of God, as verses 5 to 8 of our Bible lesson again remind us, but also tells us that God is one. We have come to see, as men did not see once, that everything comes to pass in a regular and orderly manner, not by chance or without a cause. Day and night, summer and winter, the tides or the growing grass, speak to us of natural law. We do not imagine, like savages and ignorant people, that things contrary to the regular order of nature

can be brought to pass by evil spirits, or through magic and witchcraft. This means that nature is one, and therefore we are sure that the God of whom nature tells us is one. The regular laws of nature and its harmonious beauty and plan speak of one infinite Mind.

Nature, however, is only one of the revelations of God. He has also made himself known through the history of nations, and he revealed himself in a special way to the Jewish people, whose whole history as recorded in the Old Testament shows God's providential guidance. The Old Testament tells us that God chose the people of Israel to be his in a peculiar sense. He promised Abraham, a man who had faith in him, that he would protect his descendants, so that his family should grow into a great nation, and should possess the beautiful country of Canaan. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, or Israel (Gen. xxxv. 10), was obliged because of a famine to remove with his family into Egypt. There in the course of years his descendants grew into a numerous people. Their numbers alarmed the King of Egypt, and he began to oppress them. Therefore God sent Moses to deliver them from bondage. And in sending him God said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."—Exod. iii. 14. That is, he revealed himself as being not one among many gods and so needing a name to distinguish him from them, but as the one, true, self-existent God. In order to deliver his people, God sent the plagues against Egypt, which are enumerated in Psalm 105: 23 to 37. And when Pharaoh let the Israelites go, but afterwards pursued them with an army, God enabled them to cross the Red Sea in safety, and overwhelmed the Egyptians. The story of this deliverance is fully told in Exodus, chapters iii., v., and vii. to xiv. inclusive. That it impressed upon the Israelites the truth that God is one may be illustrated from the close connec-

tion of the First Commandment with the words, "I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt."—Exod. xx. 2.

When the Israelites began to enter the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, they had to fight against two powerful enemies, Sihon and Og.—Ps. 135:10 to 13, Deut. ii. 26 to iii. 8. And then they had the task of conquering the nations in the main part of the land. Two incidents of this war are the capture of Jericho and of Ai.—Josh. vi. 1 to 22 and viii. 1 to 23. These will serve as illustrations; the principle to be brought out is that the Israelites recognized God as their helper, made known to them by his providential guidance in their history. Cp. Ps. 44: 1 to 5, Josh. xxiv. 1 to 25.

During their wanderings and wars they were often tempted to fall away from the worship and service of the one true God, and take up the idolatry of the nations with whom they came in contact. These heathen peoples worshiped strange idols with cruel sacrifices, such as burning children in honor of Moloch; and had many wicked customs, which they thought were pleasing to their gods. It was to guard the chosen people against being led away into idolatry and immorality that they were commanded to kill the heathen who were in Canaan and to make no treaties or marriages with them.—Deut. vii. 1 to 7. But they yielded many times to the temptation to associate with the heathen and worship their gods. For this they were often severely punished, but when they repented God showed mercy and delivered them. See for example Exod. xxxii., Numb. xxv. 1 to 6, Judges iii. 5 to 12.

In this way they gradually learned the folly of serving the many idols and imaginary gods of heathen peoples.—Ps. 135: 15 to 19, Isa. xlv. 9 to 21, 1 Cor. viii. 6. And they came to know surely the first great truth of religion, that

there is one only God who rules over the affairs of men, guides and guards those who believe in and serve him, and desires the worship and obedience of men. See the last three verses of our Bible lesson and the text.

The unity of nature tells us that God is one.

This truth is more clearly revealed in the history of Israel, particularly in God's choosing a people and delivering them from slavery in Egypt.

It is revealed also in the story of his helping them to win the promised land.

They were tempted often to worship false gods and to follow heathen ways, and were punished until they repented. Thus they learned that there is no God but the LORD, and that they must serve him only.

NOTE.—More material, probably, has been suggested by way of illustration than can be used in an hour, and the teacher should select such of the Bible stories as seem best suited to the class.

The next lesson reminds us of the just commandments that God gave to his people, and the revelation of himself as the God of righteousness. The first of our Bible passages is in praise of his perfect law, and the second tells of his goodness toward those who are righteous.

LESSON 6

THE GOD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Review. God delivered his chosen people from Egypt, and helped them to win the promised land. He taught them thus that he is the one mighty and true God, whom alone they must serve.

Text, Psalm 37: 28. *Bible lesson*, Psalms 19: 7 to 12 and 34: 15 to end.

Everyone who is not morally an idiot knows that there is a difference between right and wrong. While we do not always see just what is right in a given case, we feel sure that we have a duty always, and ought to find out what it is. Even those who do not commonly use the words "right" and "duty" have the ideas; for instance, a boy may call a certain action "fair" or speak of such a person as "square," but he means that the action or person is worthy of respect and imitation. Now if we care enough for justice and right to think out what we mean by them, we see that the difference between right and wrong is real and everlasting. No matter what people may pretend, no matter how successful meanness may be, right is right, and nobody can make wrong anything else but wrong. Besides, we feel that we *ought* to do what we believe to be right. Something else may be advantageous, and doing our duty may bring loss and suffering, but the only thing worth while is to be clean, honest, square, to do right just because it is right. We cannot get away from the feeling of obligation. Well then, if right and duty are as firm as the ground underfoot or the heavens over us, they speak to us of the God of righteousness, who has established his moral law, and to whom we are accountable.

The Israelites in Old Testament times recognized, as we have seen, that God is made known as Creator by his works, and that he specially manifested himself by his providential care for their nation. They believed further that he revealed himself more fully still by his law. During their journeyings in the wilderness they received the Commandments, and all through their history they were gradually taught more completely what God would have them do. And his law showed that God is righteous, requiring of his people what is just; no other nation had "statutes and judgments so righteous."—Deut. iv. 5 to 9.

Accordingly God's people constantly delighted to set

forth the praises of his law, as in Psalm 19: 7 to 12. Here we are told that the law of God is perfect, refreshing and invigorating the soul. It gives wisdom to the simple, that is, the man whose mind is open to learn. The statutes, or precepts, of the LORD make the heart glad by showing just what we ought to do. His commandment gives us light to see our duty (cp. Ps. 119: 105). The law, called the fear of the LORD, verse 9, because it plants the fear of God in men's hearts, is clean or pure in contrast to the wickedness of heathenism. Its judgments, or decisions on particular subjects, are true and right because they carry out principles of absolute justice. Such is the law of the LORD, and it may be likened to fine gold or the sweetest food. In this way we might paraphrase Psalm 19: 7 to 12 to get the meaning clearly. The thought of the psalm as a whole is thus expressed by Dr. Kirkpatrick: "More wonderful than the heavens declaring God's glory, more beneficent than the sun's light and heat, is Jehovah's revelation of his will, which quickens and educates man's moral nature." Surely we all enter into the spirit of this psalm, and rejoice to believe in the righteous God, inasmuch as we all care for right and justice. Suppose there were no just God, and the world were a place where wickedness was bound in the end to be successful! But wrong cannot stand, because (cp. verse 1 with verse 7) the Creator whose power and majesty are made known by the heavens, is likewise the Lawgiver whose righteousness is made known by the moral goodness and beauty of his law.

Besides recognizing the splendor of God's law, the chosen people perceived from their experience of life that God cares for the righteous and punishes the wicked. This is expressed in Psalm 34: 15 to end, on which only one or two comments need be made here. In verse 19 it is not said that a good man shall have no troubles, but that the LORD

delivers him in spite of them. In verse 20 "keepeth all his bones" is a metaphor that denotes the preservation of the man's whole being. The main thought of this passage should be fully brought out and illustrated in class. It is also expressed in Psalm 37, verses 1, 2, 7 to 10, 25, and 35 to end, which teach us not to murmur or be envious when we see the wicked successful and the good unfortunate, for in the end God will destroy the wicked and help the righteous. And so we are convinced that a God of righteousness lives and reigns who will do justice, even though the good enter into his kingdom only through much tribulation. "All things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii. 28. The world is not essentially evil, for he who made and rules it is on the side of right; and even the pain and evil in the world may be ministers of good, bringing men to repentance and faith. No matter what happens, we may be sure that "the LORD loveth the thing that is right; he forsaketh not his that are godly, but they are preserved forever."

The everlasting difference between right and wrong speaks of the God of righteousness.

His law reveals his righteous nature more fully.

The excellence of his law is praised in the Psalms.

Experience of life convinces his people that the God of righteousness "forsaketh not his that are godly."

The next lesson goes on to show that God is not only righteous and just, but also kind and merciful. Of this his people were sure from his dealings with men. They were convinced that he has both the power and the will to help, and they put their trust in him. The teacher is reminded of what is said on page ix. about omitting this lesson or combining it with the following, in case the course must be shortened.

LESSON 7

THE GOD OF MERCY AND LOVING-KINDNESS

Review. The law that God gave reveals him as the God of righteousness, whose law is perfect. And his people know that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Text, Psalm 145: 9. *Bible lesson*, Psalm 146.

God is made known, we have seen, through nature, through the history of his chosen people and through his law. But he revealed himself more directly to certain men, the prophets, through whom he taught his people. For from time to time men appeared to whose hearts the Spirit of God spoke, and who had a message from him. Sometimes he showed them his will, or made his nature better known to them, by means of visions (Isa. vi. 1 to 9). Sometimes he showed them what would come to pass in the future, and revealed especially the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. Sometimes the message laid upon them was that they should denounce wickedness. These inspired prophets had a deeper and more intimate knowledge of God than ever comes naturally to men; and we have in the Bible records of their teaching. This, we must remember, is a still more important manner of revelation than those we have spoken of before.

What God taught through the prophets is the same truth about himself and his will for men that he revealed in other ways. Thus they speak of his almighty power as Creator; for example, Isa. xlv. 12 and 18, Jer. x. 12. They declare that there is one only God and idols are nothing (Isa. xlv. 8 to 21). And they proclaim that he desires righteousness, and will judge the wicked (Micah vi. 8 to 16, Zeph. iii. 5, Zech. vii. 9 to end). But another message they give quite as

emphatically, that God is merciful to his people if they are faithful (Lam. iii. 22, Joel ii. 12, 13, Jer. ix. 24 and xxxi. 3); and merciful to all men if they will serve him (Isa. ii. 2, 3, xlix. 6, and lx. 1 to 4). Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the prophets felt the nearness of God to his people and to all men, and had a living trust in him. And so, although they most earnestly taught Israel to worship the one, Almighty God of righteousness and judgment, they no less earnestly taught men to put confidence in the God of mercy.—Isa. xxvi. 3, 4, Jer. xvii. 7. We may in this lesson, then, connect the prophetic method of revelation with the truth that we can trust in the mercy and loving-kindness of God.

The inspired writers of the Psalms were filled with confident faith in the goodness of the LORD; see for example Psalm 100. Our Bible lesson begins with praises of the LORD, and sets forth his power and goodness as its central thought. His eternal omnipotence is contrasted with the passing feebleness of men. Even princes, however powerful they may seem for a time, must die and become helpless; as soon as the breath has left their bodies, all their schemes perish. (Illustrate from history or from current events.) But happy is the man who trusts in the LORD; for in contrast to feeble and perishing men God is almighty and changeless. He made heaven and earth and sea, he rules over all things now; undoubtedly he is able to help. This thought we may illustrate briefly from other passages of Scripture. His eternal existence is contrasted with man's short life in Psalm 90: 1 to 11, and with the passing natural world in Psalm 102: 25 to 28. We can rely on him as the everlasting LORD; "the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."—Deut. xxxiii. 27. Again, space as well as time is nothing to him; we are everywhere under his all-seeing eye.—Ps. 139: 7 to 13. Since, then, he is Almighty, everlasting, present everywhere, he

cannot change; "he keepeth his promise forever." And his loving-kindness is sure. The Psalmist, looking with faith on the experiences of life, sees that God's providential care extends to all who have need of him. He helps them to right that suffer wrong, he feeds the hungry. He frees men from prison, that is, from suffering, and gives sight to the blind, that is, figuratively, enlightenment to moral and spiritual ignorance. Literally these sayings are fulfilled in the miracles of our Lord and the apostles. God helps the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, he cares for the righteous and punishes the wicked; as we often see for ourselves. Such is the LORD, and his reign is not transitory like that of earthly princes, but forever. In this way we may paraphrase and illustrate our Bible lesson.

We can depend, then, upon the goodness of God. "The LORD is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works." As Psalm 23 tells us, he leads us as a shepherd his sheep. And so, since he is both Almighty and merciful, "in God we trust," just as, in lower degree, we trust a human person who is both able and willing to help us.

God revealed himself in Old Testament times most directly to the prophets.

They taught that he is Almighty, one, righteous, and a merciful God in whom men should trust.

This is taught in Psalm 146 also, where the power and goodness of God are contrasted with the feebleness of the mightiest among men.

Since God is the Almighty Creator and Ruler, and shows himself to be merciful and kind, we trust in him.

The next lesson goes on to the full revelation of God's goodness given by our Lord in his teaching that God is our Father, who loves and cares for each one of us.

LESSON 8

OUR FATHER; GOD'S LOVE AND CARE FOR US

Review. God alone is Almighty, and he is merciful and kind. Therefore we put our trust in him.

Text, 1 St. John iii. 1. *Bible lesson*, St. Matt. vi. 24 to end—Gospel for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

That God is our Father is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Even in the Old Testament he is revealed as merciful and loving, and is spoken of as Father (Deut. xxxii. 6, Isa. lxiii. 16, Ps. 68: 5 and 103: 13); but the Fatherhood of God is perfectly revealed by Christ. He uses the name Father in the Lord's Prayer and at others of the most impressive points in the Sermon on the Mount. See Matt. v. 16, 45 and 48, vi. 4, 6 and 18. The apostles, too, speak of God as our Father, as in Phil. i. 2, Gal. iv. 6, sentences at Morning Prayer.

Our Lord's teaching about the Fatherhood of God, as given in our Bible lesson, is familiar to everyone, but much study and reflection will not exhaust its meaning. As the points to be brought out and illustrated the following are suggested. We ought never to be anxious about even the necessities of life; for life is more than food and the body than clothing, and God, who has given us life will provide the means for its preservation. Why are we anxious about food? For, although the birds store up none, the Father feeds them; and we are of more value than they. And why are we anxious about clothing? For the lilies in the field do not spin, and yet God clothes them more beautifully than the richest king; and he will much more clothe us than the flowers which are gone in a day. Therefore we ought not to be anxious about food and clothing, which the followers of mammon seek; for our heavenly Father knows our needs.

If we seek the kingdom of God, all these things will be added to us; that is, if we make it our object to serve God, we find that he gives us all that is for our good, not everything, to be sure, that we happen to wish for, but all that we need. In fact he gives us many pleasures and blessings besides. To sum up, God is our Father, who knows and cares for our needs, and provides for us, his children.

A few comments may be added here on points that need be treated only incidentally, if at all, in class. "Mammon" is a Syriac word meaning riches, and indicates not simply the possession of wealth, but the spirit of covetousness. "Take no thought," or better, "be not anxious," does not mean that we should fail to take due care of our bodies, or should be wasteful and make no provision for the future, but that we should not fret and worry even about the things we need. "Meat" is used in its old sense of food generally. "Stature" ought probably to be translated "age," or "the measure of his life." Then the meaning of the verse would be: No one by being anxious can add even a little to the length of his life; if then, anxiety about our lives is useless, why should we be anxious about the means of sustaining life? "The grass of the field" includes the flowers growing in it, which were cut down with it for fuel.

If we would fully appreciate God's love toward us, we should distinguish two ways in which we are his children, by creation and by adoption. Through his creative power our heavenly Father gives being to men, as to all creatures; and he makes mankind "in his image," giving us the capacity to know him and to do his will. He is the Father of all men, because he made and cares for all. But we are also the children of God by adoption; he is in a special sense the Father of those who believe. All men, though the sons of God by creation, turned out bad sons; they left their Father and chose evil as their master. Then he sent the

Saviour to bring all men back, and "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." See also Rom. viii. 14 to 17, Gal. iv. 4 to 8. God adopts those who believe in him through Christ. His family on earth is the Church, and in Baptism we are made his children by adoption and grace. He takes into his family as many of his children by creation, who have wandered away, as will return to him.

Thus God is truly our Father, loving each individual in a way that infinitely surpasses the love of the best earthly father for his children, and caring for each with an ever-watchful providence. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." He does for each what is best, though often we cannot see whither he is leading us. Cp. Heb. xii. 6 to 12. A soldier, though he cannot see much of the battle, and does not know his general's plans, trusts him. Once when a storm was raging, a boy at sea was asked whether he was not afraid. "No, my father is at the helm." Since God is our Father, worry is useless and sinful; we can serve him and fear nothing. Whoever can truly say, "I believe in God the Father," knows that God cares for us and will supply our needs.

The truth that God is our Father, which was partly known before, was perfectly revealed by our Lord.

He teaches that our heavenly Father knows and cares for each individual, and provides for the needs of each.

God is the Father of all as Creator, and the Father in a special sense of those who believe.

Since God is our Father, we have confident trust in him, free from all worry and anxiety.

The next lesson brings out the highest sense in which we

speaking of the Fatherhood of God, the truth, namely, that he is eternally the Father of his only-begotten Son. The subject necessarily is not easy, and the children may fear that they cannot answer the questions; but, as the teacher should point out, these follow the Bible lesson and text closely, and may be answered almost in the words of Scripture. The teacher will be repaid for studying the Bible lesson in Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*.

LESSON 9

THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; GOD IS LOVE

Review. Our Lord tells us we need never be anxious; for God, who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, will supply our wants. God is our heavenly Father, who loves and cares for all his children, and specially blesses those who believe in him.

Text, 2 St. John 3. *Bible lesson*, 1 St. John iv. 7 to end—Epistle for the First Sunday after Trinity.

There are among men different degrees of fatherhood. Thus we call our ancestors our fathers, as in the hymn, "Our fathers' God to thee," although our forefathers did not directly give us life, and are not so closely related to us as our own fathers. In like manner there are different ways in which God is the Father. We have seen that he is the Father of all men as Creator, and the Father of some men in a special sense—namely, of those who believe, and are made his children by adoption. In the highest and only perfect way he is the Father of his only-begotten Son, and it is in this sense especially that he is called God the Father in the Creed. He has an only Son, who is related to him in a way wholly different from the relation in which even the greatest

and best of his human children stand to him. Human sons have just the same nature as their human fathers, they are men; God's only Son has just the same nature as his divine Father, he is God.

Our Lord repeatedly spoke of God as his Father in a unique sense. For instance: "my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21, last verse of the Gospel for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity); "my heavenly Father" (Matt. xviii. 35, last verse of the Gospel for the Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity); "my Father" (John xv. 1 and 10, in the Gospel for St. Mark's Day). See also Matt. xi. 27. And the apostles speak often of "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; for example, Rom. xv. 6, in the Epistle for the Second Sunday in Advent; 2 Cor. xi. 31, last verse of the Epistle for Sexagesima; Col. i. 3, first verse in the Epistle for the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity. See also our text.

The eternal Fatherhood of God is set forth in our Bible lesson. His love toward us is shown by his sending his Son into the world that we might live through him. But that our Lord came into the world implies that he was with the Father before he came among men; that we live through him implies that he is of a nature vastly greater than ours. And St. John speaks of him as God's "only-begotten Son." This indicates that he is not made, or created, as all things and men and angels are. All these have come into being through God's creative power, and are dependent upon his indwelling presence for their continuance; whereas the Son is not a creature, but essentially of the same divine nature as the Father. And so, whoever desires that God should dwell in him and he in God must "confess that Jesus is the Son of God." This being so, we see that God is the Father of Jesus Christ in the truest and most perfect sense.

"God is love," St. John further declares. This one word *love* best expresses the inmost nature of the Almighty.

Since the Father of his own free will sent his beloved Son, his only Son, to die for us, though we were alienated from him by sin, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." But God loves us because he *is* love essentially and eternally. Men have existed for him to love only a little while, and the love that he has toward us is a manifestation of his divine nature, of what he is in himself. He *is* love, and consequently shows forth love toward us, because he is eternally Father; before the worlds were made, before there were angels or men for him to love, he existed, not as a single, solitary Person, but as the Father of his only-begotten Son. Cp. John xvii. 24. In the Holy Trinity, we should remember also, the perfect union of the Father and the Son is realized through the Holy Spirit. And so, because God is Father from all eternity, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding eternally from the Father and the Son, is the bond of mutual love and union, God is eternally and essentially love.

The truth that God is love in his very nature is of the deepest practical value, for it is the basis of all our love toward him and toward men. Let us therefore emphasize the following points in our Bible lesson. Since God is love, every one that loves is born of him and knows him, whereas he that does not love does not know God. Since he loved us, and sent his Son to die for our sins, we ought to love one another. We love because he first loved us. And if we love him whom we have not seen, we must assuredly love our brethren.

In the highest sense God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord speaks of God as being in a special sense *his* Father, and the apostles call God "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Since he who came into the world to save us is God's only begotten Son, God is manifestly Father in his very nature.

God is love essentially, because he is the Father of his only begotten Son.

Because God is love and has manifested his love toward us, we love him and our fellow men.

REVIEW

The next hour should be used for a review of the course thus far (see page 13). We have tried to see, first, that Christian faith means belief in the living God, who loves us, and who has shown his love in such ways that we can know and love him and strive to do his will. Secondly, that we ought to confess this faith both by word and deed. Thirdly, that this faith, as our Lord himself taught, is faith in one God, who exists in three Persons. Then we set before ourselves the aim of studying the revelation given to us of each of these Persons, and first, of God the Father. He is the Almighty Creator, revealing himself as such alike in his works and in the Scriptures (lesson 4). He is one God, who taught his chosen people by his providential dealings with them to worship and serve him alone (lesson 5). He is righteous, and manifests himself to be so by the knowledge of right and wrong which we find in our hearts, by his perfect law and by his care for the righteous (lesson 6). He is merciful, no less than he is just, and this he revealed through the prophets especially (lesson 7). In these lessons, then, we studied some great truths about God and also some of the ways in which he has made himself known, endeavoring thus to see that he is a real and living God, whom we may know and in whom we may trust. Then we considered (lesson 8) the revelation of him as our Father,

which was begun in the Old Testament and fully given by our Lord. And finally we have seen that he is Father eternally, and that therefore God is essentially love.

The teacher should lay special stress on three points. First, the Old Testament revelation has made known for all time the unity of God; and this truth was more fully taught, not set aside, by our Lord. Secondly, the one, Almighty, righteous God, who punishes sin with strict justice, is merciful and loving. Thirdly, the method of the Old Testament revelation is adapted to our human capacities; God speaks through nature, history, the law and the prophets in such a way that we can understand the message.

In lesson 10 we begin the second paragraph of the Creed, concerning God the Son, whom we know as our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of us all. That he is truly the Son of God and truly became man to save us is the profound truth which we must try to see more perfectly by our study of the Bible. And first we consider, in lesson 10, that he is the only-begotten Son, who perfectly reveals God. This great subject is not easy, but if the children notice carefully what the Bible lesson tells them, they will see how to answer the questions of the *Outline*, and will find that the subject grows clear and deeply interesting.

GOD THE SON

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

LESSON 10

THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

Review. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, eternally the Father of his only-begotten Son. His very nature is love.

Text, St. John iii. 16. *Bible lesson,* Heb. i. 1 to 13—first Epistle for Christmas-day.

In our lessons concerning God the Father we learned of the ways in which he made himself known to men before the coming of our Lord to the earth; he manifested himself through the natural world, through the history of his chosen people, through the law and through the prophets. Of these earlier revelations the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks when it tells us that God spoke to men in old times by the prophets by divers portions (that is, piece by piece or fragmentarily) and in many various ways. But there was a higher way in which God could make himself more fully known. Just as we know a person best when we see him face to face, so God is best known by the coming of his Son to dwell among men. See pages 23, 24. Accordingly the Epistle goes on to say that in the last days, that is, in the age when it was written, and as the climax

of all the revelations that had gone before, God spoke to men by his Son. Our Lord is the final and perfect revelation of the Father.* As illustrating this, point out that the second paragraph of the creeds is much longer than the others. This presents to the eye the fact that the full knowledge of God is given through the coming of our Lord; that is, the great facts of our Lord's life, which occupy so large a space in the creeds, manifest the nature of the Son of God, and consequently reveal the Father.

That we may be sure our Lord has truly and perfectly revealed God the Father to us, we need to be sure that he himself is truly God; and this our Bible lesson expounds. The Son is "heir of all things," we are told. A man is his father's heir when his father leaves him the control of his possessions; and our Lord is called the heir of God the Father, because the Father has given him all power in heaven and earth, and put all things in subjection under him. Cp. Matt. xxviii. 18, 1 Cor. xv. 27. Again we are told, God "made the worlds" by him. That is, the Son is the agent of the Father in creation, sharing in the creative work which is possible to God alone. Cp. John i. 3. And so in the Nicene Creed we say of God the Son, "by whom all things were made." Further we are told, he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his substance (as it should be translated rather than "person"). These seemingly hard words really give us two beautiful illustrations of the truth that our Lord is very God. The sun sends forth light, or a mass of molten iron glows brightly and sends out an overpowering heat. The light is not the same as the sun, nor is the glowing heat the same as the iron; but the light and the glow shining forth truly come from the sun or the iron, and make known to us what the

* The teacher should read Gore, *The Creed of the Christian*, section on "Revelation."

nature of the thing is from which they come. They are distinct from the sun and the iron, but are not of a different nature. So our Lord is truly divine, and reveals God the Father to us. He has in himself the fullness of the divine glory, although it was veiled during his life upon earth. He is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God," possessing from all eternity the divine nature of the Father, though a distinct Person. The second illustration is, that a seal makes upon wax an exact impression of itself, so that in every particular the impression corresponds to the original pattern. And so the phrase "the express image of his substance" tells us that our Lord is as truly and fully divine as God the Father, "of one substance with the Father."

The latter part of our Bible lesson sets forth the superiority of our Lord even to the angels, the most perfect and glorious of all created beings. The Son is contrasted with the angels in that he is begotten, whereas the angels are created, just as the things we see and we ourselves are created. The Father has said to none of the angels, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." But our Lord is "begotten, not made." He is contrasted with the angels, again, in that he is worshiped by them, who will themselves receive worship from no one, and will worship God only. Cp. Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9. And he is contrasted with them, finally, in that they are God's ministers, made by him; but the Son rules from everlasting to everlasting. In the beginning he made heaven and earth, and when all things pass away he shall endure unchanged. He is "begotten of his Father before all worlds," and abides forever. Thus the teaching of the Creed that Jesus Christ, our one Lord, is the only Son of God, is the teaching of the Bible. The Saviour whom our loving Father sent into the world, in order that whosoever believes in him should have eternal life, is the only-begotten Son of God. We can therefore be sure

that he reveals God perfectly, and that he is the one Redeemer of all mankind.

Many revelations were given in old times through the prophets, but the final revelation is given by the Son of God.

Our Lord is the Son of God; for he is the heir of all things, he made the worlds, and he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his substance. He is superior even to the angels; for they are created, but he is begotten; he is worshiped by them; he has existed from all eternity, and abides forever.

The next lesson is the old and beautiful story of the way in which our Lord came to earth. To tell the story of the Annunciation and of the first Christmas-day will be a pleasure to the children, and a little reflection will show that our Lord is therein revealed both as the Son of God and as truly human. (The text is given in the words of the Marginal Readings Bible.)

LESSON 11

CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Review. Our Lord before ever he came to earth was the everlasting Son of the Father. He made the worlds, he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the impress of his substance; and whereas even the angels are creatures, he is the only-begotten Son.

Text, Gal. iv. 4. *Bible lessons,* St. Luke i. 26 to 39—Gospel for the Annunciation; and St. Luke ii. 1 to 15—second Gospel for Christmas-day.

When God sent his Son that we might have eternal life,

how did he come to our earth? The people of Israel, who hoped and expected that a Saviour would be sent to them, looked for a powerful and glorious king, who would vanquish their enemies. Cp. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Their history told them that God had appeared to their forefathers as a terrible and majestic God, whose glory no man could approach and live. See Exod. iii. 2 to 7, xix. 10 to 20. They could have imagined that he would again show mighty and dreadful signs of his glorious power, or that he would speak to men with a great voice from heaven. But supposing he had chosen such ways of making himself known and of telling us what he would have us do, it would have been impossible for us to understand such a message from on high about the eternal nature of God, and hard to see the meaning of his commands. He chose another and far more loving way; he sent his Son to show us his nature as our Father, and sent him not in glory and power, but as the Babe of Bethlehem, who would teach us by human acts and words. Such a message we can understand, though we can never exhaust its meaning; and it comes home to our hearts. The mighty God, who is Spirit and is utterly beyond our sight and understanding, can be known and loved because "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."—I John iv. 2.

The story of the Annunciation and of our Lord's birth should occupy the chief place in our lesson. It is necessary here only to suggest a few reflections. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a small place, Nazareth, in Galilee, a remote and despised part of the country. He appeared to a virgin, Mary, who was betrothed, but not yet married, to a carpenter named Joseph. They both were descendants of King David, but were poor people in simple, humble circumstances. We can almost see the angel coming to the Blessed Virgin, and hear his salutation, and then his announcement that she should bring forth a Son, JESUS, the

Son of the Highest, who should reign over the kingdom of David forever. This is a wonderful promise, and she is indeed blessed among women, because she was chosen to be the one of whom the Son of God should be born. We must recognize how pure and holy she was, and must think of her with the deepest reverence; but it is wrong to worship, or pray to, any person, except God only. To her question how it should be that she should have a son, the angel answered, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." We know something about the power of the Holy Ghost, and shall learn in later lessons how he came upon Christ in the form of a dove when he was baptized, and gave him strength for his work, and how he came upon the disciples at Pentecost as a flame, and gave them power to teach people of all languages. So also he came and overshadowed the Blessed Virgin before our Lord was born, and through his power our Lord was made man. Thus Jesus was the Son of the Highest both as God and as man. And Mary said, "Be it unto me according to thy word," by this free acceptance of God's will making it possible that our Saviour should enter into the world. The Magnificat, her song of praise, so frequently used in Evening Prayer, continually reminds us of the Incarnation.

The birth of Christ was to be in Bethlehem, as Micah v. 2 had foretold. This was a little village six miles south of Jerusalem, and Joseph and his betrothed went there from Nazareth, because of the Emperor's decree that everyone must be enrolled on the tax-lists. The familiar incidents that there was no room for them in the inn, they took shelter in a stable, the new-born Babe was laid in a manger, his birth was announced not to the rich men and rulers in Jerusalem, but to the poor, hard-working shepherds out in the fields, all bring before us the self-abnegation of our Lord in coming from heaven to a lowly birth in this world. That

our Lord was as truly a human child as any other ever born is plain from all that is told us of his birth, and is enforced for us by the simplicity and poverty of his coming. That he is as truly the Son of God is evident from his being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin according to the angel's announcement, and from the angel's message to the shepherds and the praises of the heavenly host. He was, then, perfect God before he came to earth, and he became perfectly Man. He, the Son of God, "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Because of his love and pity for us he was born as a real child and grew to be a real man; he took upon him our complete nature, body, mind, feeling, will. Thus he came in such a way that we can understand his revelation of the Father, because we can learn through his life of love that God is love; and in such a way that he showed us not by precept alone but by example how we ought to live. And so the great method by which God chose to reveal himself was that, when the right moment in the world's history had come, he sent forth his Son, born under all the conditions of our human nature, and born to give us an example of obedience to God's law.

Because God sent his Son as the Babe of Bethlehem, we can understand his message and love him.

The story of the Annunciation shows us that our Lord is the Son of the Highest, and was born by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The story of his birth shows the humility in which he was born for us and the divine glory that is his by right.

The next lesson in taking up the notable passage Phil. ii. 5 to 12 necessarily enters upon ground less easy than the Gospel stories; but the main thought is the simple and

moving one that Jesus is the human name of the Son of God, our Saviour. The questions of the *Outline* are not difficult, if it is observed that they contain the important words of the verses to which they refer.

LESSON 12

THE NAME JESUS

Review. The Son of God came down from heaven and was born of the Virgin Mary as the Holy Child of Bethlehem.

Text, St. Matt. i. 21. *Bible lesson,* Phil. ii. 5 to 12—Epistle for the Sunday next before Easter.

The name Jesus is the human name of God the Son; it reminds us that he saves us from our sins by becoming man. When the holy child was born, he had to receive a name, just as all children do, since he was truly a human baby. With us a boy receives his name, as John or William, at his Baptism; among the Jews a boy's name was given at his circumcision, and our Lord received his human name in the way that God's ancient law required.—Luke ii. 21, last verse of Gospel for the Circumcision. Our Lord gave us in this an example of humility and obedience, and began even as a baby to share in all our human experience. The name was one of those in common use at the time, just as Simon or John was.—Acts xiii. 6, Col. iv. 11. But it was also a name specially appointed and full of meaning. The angel who announced his birth to the Virgin Mary said to her, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," as we saw in our last lesson. And the angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream before the birth of the Child gave him the same command. See our text, and the Gospel for the Sunday after Christmas-day, from which it is taken. The name has the meaning, "God his Saviour," and it is another form of "Joshua," the name

of the heroic leader who brought God's people into the promised land and defeated their enemies. (The form "Jesus" is used for Joshua in Acts vii. 45 and Heb. iv. 8 in the King James Version.) The meaning, then, of this divinely appointed name makes it appropriate for the Saviour who vanquished sin and death, and who leads his people into the kingdom of heaven.

Why the human name of our Lord is so worthy of reverence as it is, appears more fully from our Bible lesson. There St. Paul tells us that Christ Jesus, being originally in the form of God, did not think his equality with God something to be eagerly held. (More literally, did not think it booty, that is, something that needs to be clutched jealously.) But he took upon himself our human nature, which is called "the form of a servant," because by entering into human life our Lord left his Father's glory and submitted himself to the lowly conditions of this world. Note that "form" does not mean the mere appearance either of divinity or of humanity, but denotes that, just as truly as Jesus Christ was man here upon earth, he was God before he entered into our world. It is hardly necessary to add that he was truly God in his deepest humility, and that we must be careful not to give our pupils the idea that by coming to earth he ceased to be God. The apostle goes on to say that our Lord still further humbled himself after he became man, even to the death of the Cross. Not only did he take upon him our human lot, but he submitted to the hardest life of suffering and the most shameful death. And then, because he humbled himself, God exalted him by his resurrection and ascension. Thereby his human nature was raised to the highest glory; for it is as Man that our divine Saviour rose, ascended, rules over heaven and earth, and will come to judge the world. That his name "is above every name" may be illustrated from the works done "in the name of

Jesus Christ," and from his promise that prayer so made shall be answered. See Acts iii. 6, 16, iv. 10 to 13, xvi. 18; John xiv. 12, 13. Our Lord's human name, then, is mightily exalted, because he humbled himself to become man and to suffer for our salvation. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," is the lesson that St. Paul would have us draw.

This name, then, denoting Saviour, given because he should "save his people from their sins," the human name that is glorified because of our Saviour's self-abasement, calls forth our reverence and love toward him. It tells us continually that our salvation was wrought by our Saviour becoming man. Cp. 1 Tim. i. 15. His teaching and example, his death for our sins, his resurrection by which we have new life, all are made possible by his having taken our human nature upon him. The Son of God is our Saviour, and he saves us by becoming Man. Cp. Hymn 149. Whenever, then, we hear or use the name JESUS, it should be with careful reverence, and with the recollection that he saves *us* from *our* sins. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." —Acts iv. 12. And *our* tongues ought to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." We do confess him in the Creeds as "Jesus Christ our Lord" or "one Lord Jesus Christ." Our living as becomes those who have been brought by his Incarnation into the way of salvation ought to show that this confession is sincere.

The Babe of Bethlehem received a human name like other children, but a name that was appointed for him and was of deep meaning.

This human name of God the Son is honored above every name, because he is exalted as man in consequence of his humbling himself to become man and to suffer.

His name JESUS reminds us that he saves us from our sins, and that we should confess him as our Lord.

The next lesson is based on the Gospel story of the wise men, and the questions are not difficult. The main thought is the meaning of the title Christ, denoting our anointed Prophet, Priest and King.

LESSON 13

THE TITLE CHRIST

Review.—The name Jesus reminds us that our Lord, the Son of God, humbled himself to become man and to die upon the Cross, that he might be our Saviour.

Text, St. John i. 41. *Bible lesson*, St. Matt. ii. 1 to 13—Gospel for the Epiphany.

As Jesus is the human name of our Lord, so Christ is his official title describing the work that he came to do. He is called Jesus the Christ, just as we speak of Elisha the Prophet, Aaron the High Priest, David the King, or St. John the Baptist. The word Christ, like the corresponding Hebrew word Messiah, means the anointed. Now anointing, that is, pouring sacred oil upon the head, was the mode of setting a man apart as a prophet, a priest or a king. It signified that the man was chosen by Almighty God for the office, and was given special grace for his work. Illustrations: Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16); Aaron and his sons (Exod. xl. 12 to 17); David (1 Sam. xvi. 1 to 14). A prophet was a man sent by God to teach men his will. A priest was one who offered sacrifices for sin. These sacrifices were innocent animals, as lambs, which were put to death in such a way that their blood was shed; and men were taught by this the guilt of sin, and that they could not be forgiven, or reconciled

to God, except by the sacrifice of some life. A king was one who ruled over the people, defending them from their enemies and executing justice.

The coming of the Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament, and many indications were given in regard to his office and work. He should be a prophet (Deut. xviii. 15, cp. Acts iii. 22); a priest (Zech. vi. 13); a king (Isa. ix. 6, 7, Zech. ix. 9, cp. John xii. 12 to 17). And particular prophecies concerning him were not lacking. He should be of the family of David the son of Jesse (Isa. xi. 1 to 5, Jer. xxiii. 5, in Epistle for the Sunday next before Advent, cp. John vii. 42) and of the town of Bethlehem (Micah. v. 2, cp. Matt. ii. 5, 6). Consequently the Jews of our Lord's time expected a Messiah, although they looked rather for a national hero and king than for the Christ whom God really sent.—Luke iii. 15, John iv. 25, vii. 31.

The story of the wise men should occupy the chief place in teaching this lesson to children, but it needs little comment here. The reverence of the wise men and the royal gifts they offered were an acknowledgment that the Infant was no ordinary child, but divine. Of these gifts, gold was an appropriate tribute to a king, frankincense was used in worship, and myrrh for embalming. We may therefore think of the incense as signifying his divinity, the myrrh, his sacrifice of himself, and the gold, his royal office. Cp. Hymn 64. And in the visit of the magi we may see a recognition, even in the infancy of Jesus, that he was the divine Saviour-King, foretold by the prophets and sent forth by God. The fact that the magi were not Jews, but came from the distant East, showed that the Christ was to rule over men of every race, and to be the Saviour of the whole world. Applications that may be made of the Epiphany story are suggested by Hymn 65.

That the Child born at Bethlehem was truly the Christ

is shown by his fulfilling all that had been prophesied of the Messiah. He was anointed, not literally with oil, but with the Holy Ghost.—Acts x. 38, Matt. iii. 16, 17, Luke iv. 18, cp. Isa. lxi. 1. He is our Prophet, because he above all others teaches us God's will; and this was recognized by those who heard him and saw his works.—John iii. 2, iv. 19, vii. 40. He is our Priest, because he offered himself once for all as the Lamb of God to take away our sins, and he continually offers up our prayers before God, and pleads his one sacrifice.—John i. 29, Heb. ix. 11 to 15. He is our King, the sovereign master of his people, who shall come to rule over all in righteousness.—Luke i. 32, 33. Hence while he was among men those who had eyes to see recognized that in him they had "found the Messiah." We, too, confess in the Creeds that he is Christ, and we try to acknowledge him as our Prophet, Priest and King both by our faith and in our lives.

Christ is our Saviour's title, signifying his office of prophet, priest and king.

The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah who should accomplish this threefold work.

The adoration of the wise men showed that the Holy Child was come for a divine office and work.

Our Saviour Jesus was truly the Christ, for he fulfilled all that had been foretold of the Messiah.

The next nine lessons bring before us events of our Lord's life not mentioned in the Creeds, from which all the events of his public ministry are omitted, because they are too many and wonderful to be recounted briefly. In our lessons, however, we must study some of these incidents, because his mighty deeds and words show so impressively who our Lord is, just as an ordinary man's words and actions show the man's character. The life, miracles and

teachings of our Saviour manifest both his divine power and majesty and his human sympathy and goodness. We begin this part of our subject with the witness that the Baptist bore to Christ.

LESSON 14

THE WITNESS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Review. The title Christ reminds us that our Saviour Jesus was the expected Messiah, anointed with the Holy Ghost as our Prophet, Priest and King.

Text, St. John i. 6, 7. *Bible lesson,* St. John i. 19 to 29—Gospel for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

When our Lord came to the age of about thirty, a report spread among the people that a prophet had appeared preaching the immediate coming of the Messiah. Great crowds went out to hear his news concerning the kingdom of God and the Christ whom they looked for. They found the prophet, whose name was John, in the wilderness of Judea near the mouth of the Jordan. His appearance was stern, his clothing rough, his food what the desert supplied. The people were impressed by his simplicity of life and his earnest message, and believed rightly that he was a prophet, a man who speaks thoughts that God has specially put into his heart. The conviction that filled him was that a great crisis was near at hand, a judgment to be executed by a personal judge, whose mission was vastly greater than his own. He warned the people, "the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."—Matt. iii. 10. Every man therefore should repent of his own particular sins, whatever they were.—Luke iii. 10 to 15. As a sign

that a man repented and pledged himself to a new life, St. John would baptize him in the Jordan.

The Baptist's appearance, his message and the solemn sign that he used, were in themselves deeply impressive. But he did not allow the people to think that his mission was anything in itself; it was merely to point forward to One far greater than he, who was about to come. After a time reports concerning him reached the religious leaders of the Jews in the capital city, and they sent to inquire who he was, and why he taught the people and baptized. Then the "record" or witness that he bore to the coming Messiah was clear and unmistakable. It must have been a temptation for him to claim that he was himself some great one, and to put himself at the head of the people, who were disposed to receive and follow him. But "he confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ." Then those who were sent to inquire asked, "Art thou Elijah?" For the Jews, on account of the prophecy in Mal. iv. 5, expected Elijah to return before the Christ appeared. St. John was come indeed in the spirit and power of Elijah (cp. Luke i. 17, vii. 26, 27, Mal. iii. 1, Matt. xvii. 10 to 14); but they meant by their question a bodily return of Elijah in person, and so St. John answered, "I am not he." Some of the Jews, again, thought that Jeremiah or another of the ancient prophets would reappear (Matt. xvi. 14). "Art thou that prophet?" And he answered, "No." They are puzzled, and demand that he tell them who he claims to be. He answers in the words of Isa. xl. 3 that he himself is nothing, he is only a voice, the herald of the Christ; his whole mission is to prepare for the Lord's coming. Those who were questioning him belonged to the party of the Pharisees, who were very particular about rites and religious ceremonies, and so they demand why he baptizes. He answers, he is preparing for One so much greater than him-

self, though coming later, that he is not worthy to be the slave who unlooses his sandals. And this great One is among them already, though they do not know him. See also Matt. iii. 11, 12.

Not only, then, did the Baptist prophesy that One should come; he was inspired also to point out his mightier successor. Among those who came to be baptized was Jesus of Nazareth, and at his baptism prophetic signs were given that proclaimed him to be the beloved Son of God, anointed with the Holy Spirit.—Matt. iii. 16, 17 (quoted in lesson 44 of the *Outline*), cp. John i. 32 to 35. Accordingly the Baptist pointed him out to two of his own disciples, and they, following Jesus, were convinced that they had “found the Messiah.”—John i. 35 to 42. Thus the Baptist bore witness to our Lord, and made him manifest to the people of Israel at the very beginning of his public ministry. See what our Lord says of the Baptist in Matt. xi. 9, 10, last verses of the Gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent. Our text speaks of him as “a man sent from God . . . to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.” Do we receive that true Light, and bear faithful witness to him? Are we preparing for his Second Coming?

St. John the Baptist came preaching repentance and baptizing.

He declared that his mission was to make ready the way for One far greater than himself.

He pointed out Jesus, when he was baptized, as the expected Christ, being himself the last of the many prophets who were sent to announce the coming of our Lord.

The next lesson takes up a subject that involves many deep problems, and yet contains lessons of the simplest kind.

Starting with the story of the Temptation as the Gospels present it, we can try to enter into its deeper meaning more or less completely as the class is able. The last three questions of the *Outline* require some reflection, but most pupils will have no great difficulty with them.

LESSON 15

THE TEMPTATION OF OUR SAVIOUR

Review. St. John the Baptist bore witness at the outset of our Saviour's public ministry that he was the Christ.

Text, Heb. iv. 15. *Bible lesson,* St. Matt. iv. 1 to 12—Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent.

After our Saviour's baptism his public ministry was about to begin, his three years of wonderful teaching and marvelous works of mercy. But first he wished a quiet time for prayer and fasting, and he retired to a wild, lonely place. There he passed through a threefold temptation, that he might share all our human experience. First he was tempted to turn stones into loaves of bread. The wrong, if he had done so, would have been in using his miraculous powers to satisfy his own wants instead of trusting to the Father. He never used his power selfishly, just to save himself trouble or pain, but always for the benefit of others who were in serious need; he would not even save himself from death by asking his Father to send the angel hosts to his rescue.—Matt. xxvi. 53. So here he showed himself willing to live like any man on what God provided. This is the sense of his answer to this temptation, in which he quotes a text from the Bible (Deut. viii. 3). The meaning is, as God fed the Israelites on manna when bread failed, so everyone depends

for his life not on bread only, but on the will and command of him who can always provide what we need. Thus our Saviour's first temptation, occasioned by hunger, was to distrust his Father and make a selfish use of his own wonderful powers. He not only cast the temptation from him, but showed the most perfect trust.

When that failed, Satan tried to make our Saviour presume upon the Father's love and care by throwing himself down from the high roof or gable of the Temple; and, finding that our Saviour revered his Father's word, the devil quoted Scripture for his purpose (Ps. 91: 11). This was a temptation to pride and presumptuous daring. But our Saviour would not make experiments upon his Father's love, run into useless danger, and ask for an unnecessary miracle. He would not take any such way of startling the people and impressing upon them his right to leadership. He manifested himself instead by his patient life of service. He answered again from the Scriptures (Deut. vi. 16); a man must not tempt God, and presumptuously try whether God will intervene and protect him against dangers of his own making.

Then Satan offered our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world if he would worship him. Our Lord has the right to rule over all men, and is the King of kings; Satan offered to give him at once what is his by right, without the life of suffering and the death of the Cross. He could have begun at once to use this power in setting wrong right and putting an end to misery and injustice. But he would have had to acknowledge Satan as Lord, and give him the worship that is due to God alone; he would have had to aim at being such a Messiah as many of the Jews looked for, a conqueror whose kingdom would be of this world, sustained by force and war. Thus the temptation was to do evil that good might come. And our Saviour would not do evil in order

to spare himself or even to help others. He answered, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Cp. Deut. vi. 13, x. 20. Then the devil left him, beaten at every point.

These three temptations are typical of our Saviour's whole life. He was often weary, hungry, without a place to lay his head, and yet might in a moment have had everything he could wish, if he had used his power for himself. He might at any time have relaxed his constant labors for men and trusted that everything would somehow come out right. Or he might have allowed himself to be made king (cp. John vi. 15, xviii. 36), or have trimmed his teaching to suit men, or used other false and wrong means to accomplish his great work. And so he knows what it is to feel hunger and weariness, and to feel that pleasure or the satisfaction of pride and ambition would be attractive. But he never entertained any evil thoughts, or let the perception that pleasure or indolence or ambition would be attractive grow into a desire to sin. He could say to his enemies who were eager to find some fault in him, "Which of you convicts me of sin?"—John viii. 46, first verse of Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent. Cp. Heb. vii. 26, 1 Pet. i. 19, ii. 22. No one but our Saviour could rightly claim to be sinless; see what St. Peter, St. John and St. Paul say about the sinfulness of all men (Luke v. 8, 1 John i. 8, 10, 1 Tim. i. 15). But he is perfect. Since, then, "he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," he is truly man, able to understand our trials and temptations, and yet is without spot of sin and fit to be the one perfect example and the one perfect sacrifice.—Heb. ii. 17, 18. And so he is our Saviour, who, being completely man, can sympathize with us, being perfect man, could take away our sins, and, being the Son of God, has endless power to help us. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."—Heb. iv. 16.

Our Saviour was tempted to distrust his Father and use his miraculous power for selfish purposes.

He was tempted to presume on God's love and perform an unnecessary, startling wonder.

He was tempted to deny his Father and seek a kingdom of earthly glory founded on force.

These temptations were typical of his whole life, but he was always without sin.

That he could be tempted shows him to be truly man, able to sympathize with us; that he did no sin shows him to be perfect man and truly the Son of God, able to help to the uttermost those who come to him.

The next lesson is easy for the pupils, provided a few hints are given about answering the latter part of the question in the *Outline*. In this lesson as in others which contain several references lettered **a**, **b**, etc., the home work may be divided among the pupils (see page 12). If lessons 16 and 17 are combined, a selection of references should be made.

LESSON 16

MIRACLES OF CHRIST; HIS POWER OVER NATURE

Review. The temptation of our Saviour shows that he is completely man, able to sympathize with us, perfect man, able to take away our sins, and the Son of God, able to help us.

Text, St. John v. 36. *Bible lessons:* (a) St. John ii. 1 to 12—Gospel for the Second Sunday after Epiphany; (b) St. Luke v. 1 to 12—Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity; (c) St. Matt. viii. 23 to 28—first part of the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany; (d) St. Mark viii. 1 to 10—Gospel for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

The miracles of Christ have a prominent place in the

Gospel history, and are closely connected with his teachings and with the course that the events of his life took. It is evident that they were an important factor in determining what people thought of him, and in arousing belief in those who became his disciples. They must be taken into account if we would understand as fully as we can who he is. We cannot in teaching children go into many questions that rise in older people's minds; but we can present the recorded facts, point out their effect in leading those who witnessed them to believe, and indicate the conclusions which, we are convinced, may rightly be drawn from them.

The stories of the miracles selected should have the chief place in teaching each of these lessons. Here, however, it is enough to suggest explanations of certain details. (a) "Woman" was a form of address not disrespectful or lacking in kindness. "The governor of the feast" was one of the guests, chosen according to custom to preside. (b) "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," shows the contrast St. Peter felt between Christ's power and his own weakness, though he was a skilled fisherman, and the unworthiness he was conscious of in the presence of this wonderful person. "Thou shalt catch men" refers to his future work as an apostle in bringing men into the ship of Christ's Church. (c) Our Lord "was asleep" through weariness from teaching and healing the multitudes. "The sea of Galilee" was another name for the lake of Genesareth; it is a lake about thirteen miles long, lying among the hills, where sudden storms are not uncommon. (d) Bread with a few small fish for a relish was the common food of the poorer people. At another time under somewhat different circumstances our Lord fed another multitude of 5,000.—John vi. 5 to 15, Gospel for the Sunday next before Advent. These are only some hints in regard to certain details about these miracles. The stories of these

wonderful events, however, should be the chief feature of the lesson, and as far as possible they should be told by the children.

The effect that these miracles had on the minds of the people who saw them should be emphasized. "His disciples believed on him," in consequence of the miracle at Cana. St. Peter's action and words when he saw the draught of fishes show his astonishment and awe, which were shared by all that were with him. And their feeling was not idle, gaping wonder, but the beginning of faith; for as soon as they "brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed him." When our Lord stilled the storm, "the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" Naturally they were astonished, for it is idle for any man to speak to the wind and the sea, as King Canute is said to have proved. But notice that their thoughts turned to the question, What manner of person is this? For the miracles are of importance above all because they teach us who Christ is. The feeding of the multitude shows that our Lord possesses a divine creative power, like that of the Father, who gives to all the food they need, as we saw in lessons 4 and 8. The effect in general that Christ's miracles had upon the people is seen from John ii. 23, iii. 2 and vii. 31.

Our Lord appeals to his works as bearing witness to him even more powerfully than the witness of St. John the Baptist, as our text shows; see also John x. 25, 37, 38, xiv. 11 and xv. 24. He also warns men against regarding them as mere wonders without penetrating to their true significance and learning from them to believe in him.—John iv. 48, vi. 26, Matt. xii. 38 to 41. His apostles likewise appealed to his great works.—Acts ii. 22, x. 38, John xx. 30, 31. And some of the miracles are chosen for the Gospels for the season of Epiphany, because the Church recognizes that they manifest

his divine glory. At the end of our next lesson we will consider more fully what we mean by a miracle. We may for the present use the simple definition, a miracle is a wonderful work done by the power of God to show forth his nature.

Our Lord's miracles had a very prominent place in his ministry, and must be taken into account if we would understand who he is.

He showed power over nature: (a) by changing water into wine, (b) by bringing to pass the great draught of fishes, (c) by stilling the storm, (d) by feeding the multitude.

These mighty works made a strong impression upon the people who saw them, and many were convinced of the wonderful character of the worker.

Our Lord and his apostles appeal to his works as manifesting who he is.

The next lesson brings before us first our Lord's own summary of his mighty works, and then three instances of them.

LESSON 17

MIRACLES OF CHRIST; HIS POWER OF HEALING

Review. Our Lord's miracles convinced many who saw them of his wonderful character, and both he and his apostles appeal to them as manifesting who he is.

Text, St. John ii. 23. *Bible lessons:* (a) St. Matt. xi. 2 to 7—first part of Gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent; (b) St. Matt. viii. 1 to 4—first part of the Gospel for the Third Sunday after Epiphany; (c) St. Mark vii. 31 to end—Gospel for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity; (d) St. Luke xviii. 35 to end—last part of Gospel for Quinquagesima.

St. John the Baptist had been put in prison because he courageously rebuked wicked King Herod for his sins.—Matt. xiv. 3. In his trouble he was perplexed because our Lord did not fully show his power and publicly establish a kingdom. He did not, however, doubt our Lord, but laid his perplexity before him, relying on his word. The answer given him was more impressive than a direct reply. Our Lord did many great and merciful works of healing, which he told the disciples to report to St. John, and referred to the ancient prophecies that the Messiah would do these works. Cp. Isa. lxi. 1, xxxv. 5, 6. The last of the signs there mentioned, that the poor should “have the good tidings preached to them” was something very unusual before our Lord came to show his love for all.

(a) The Gospels tell the story of many cures wrought by Christ, and mention that there were great numbers besides. We select a few instances of his power and love. (b) First, the leper. Leprosy is a terrible, incurable disease. The kind spoken of in the Bible begins internally, appears as a white spot in the skin, and spreads over the whole body. The leper had to live outside the towns apart from all well men, and must cry “unclean” when anyone approached, so that no one should come near him. Leprosy was sometimes a punishment for sin; and it is a type of sin, in that it begins secretly, spreads over the whole person, and is incurable by man. Our Lord had the power to cure even this dread disease, and to cure it “immediately.” His love and pity did not shrink from its loathsomeness; “he put forth his hand and touched” the leper. As always, faith was required of the person who was to be healed and an outward expression of faith. (The narrative continues with the healing of the centurion’s servant, who was paralyzed, and this may be included in the lesson, although the sayings of the centurion and our Lord are difficult for younger scholars.) (c) Our

second instance is the healing of the man who was deaf and dumb. Christ touched the man's ears and tongue, partly because of his deafness, perhaps; but it was our Lord's custom to show what he was doing for a sick person by some outward act or spoken word, and we may think of this sign of touching the ears and tongue as an illustration of the principle that the works he did were outward signs of what he was. He "looked up to heaven" in prayer to his Father; "he sighed" in compassion, probably. "Ephphatha" is a word of Aramaic, the more common language of the country. Notice the impression produced upon those who saw the miracle. (d) Our last instance is the healing of the blind son of Timæus. Cp. Mark x. 46. Observe that the people told him "Jesus of Nazareth" was passing by, using the human name of our Lord, and that he calls to him by the title "Son of David," acknowledging him thus as the Christ, who is able to help him, and begs him to "have mercy," recognizing his compassion. Note, too, his resolution in trying to come to our Lord. Christ asked, "What wilt thou?" not because he did not know, but because he would have Bartimæus express his faith still more plainly. Then he said: "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath made thee whole." Notice that Bartimæus "followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." These few comments are only suggestions as to some points in these miracles. The stories in full should be the central feature of the lesson.

In explaining what a miracle is, and how it teaches us about our Lord, let us first emphasize the fact that his miracles show forth his love no less than his power. Cp. Hymn 14. As we saw in studying the Temptation, he would never work a miracle for his own benefit, or to display what he could do; as we can see in every instance, he always used his wonderful power because some one was in great need of help and came

to him with faith that he could heal. When we stop to think of it, we see that it is as natural for our Lord to heal, as much a part of his character and nature, as it is for a doctor to bring out his medicines or for a benevolent man to open his pocketbook when poverty or sickness is in need of relief. His whole life is marked by the most wonderful, self-forgetful love. The miracles are but special instances of this, and fit in most consistently with his whole character.

This thought leads us to notice by what names the Bible speaks of miracles. They are called "wonders," reminding us that they are extraordinary and mighty events, which naturally produce astonishment and awe in the beholder. But this is only their outward aspect, and the Bible does not use the name "wonder" by itself; it speaks of "signs and wonders," when that word is used. Or it calls miracles "signs." This indicates that they are outward tokens of the presence and working of God, and not mere prodigies. They have an inner significance, and should produce in us not so much amazement as faith, and the more so as they are always merciful works of love. The miracles of our Lord are also called his "works," because they are as natural to him, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," as ordinary works are to the man who does them. And so we are to think of our Lord's miracles not merely as strange and extraordinary events which prove in some incomprehensible way that what he says is true, but as works which show what manner of person he is, and as signs of his divine power and love. As our text suggests, his signs should arouse in us firmer belief in his name.

When the Baptist sent to ask Jesus for an assurance that he was the Christ, our Lord pointed to his miracles, especially his works of healing.

Our Lord healed, besides many others, the leper, the deaf man, and blind Bartimæus.

His miracles show forth not only his power but his love. They are not wonders merely, but works and signs.

The next lesson makes use of one important passage that is not in the Prayer Book. This can be assigned to pupils who have Bibles of their own.

LESSON 18

MIRACLES OF CHRIST; RAISING THE DEAD

Review. Our Lord pointed to his miracles, especially those of healing, as proving that he was the Messiah. They show forth his love no less than his power, and are not wonders merely, but works and signs.

Text, St. John v. 21. *Bible lessons*: (a) St. Luke vii. 11 to 18—Gospel for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity; (b) St. Matt. ix. 18 to 27—Gospel for the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity; (c) St. John xi. 1 to 46 (not in the Prayer Book).

The mightiest of our Lord's works, raising the dead, he wrought only three times, showing in this the restraint in the use of his power that appears in all his acts. The full story of these miracles should be the basis of the lesson, although here, as before, only some details need be spoken of. (a) He raised the widow's son at Nain. This town stands on a ridge, and a steep road leads up from the plain with rocks beside it full of caves for burying the dead. On this road two processions met, the dead man with the funeral party and the Prince of Life followed by his disciples. There was reason for our Lord's using his power, since the dead man was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

His divine compassion was aroused, and it showed itself in his pausing before raising her son to speak a word of comfort to her. He touched the bier to make the bearers stop. He spoke a brief and direct word to the dead, which proves that he acted in his own name, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And when the young man at once came back to life, Jesus showed again his loving compassion; "he delivered him to his mother." Notice the impression made upon the people present and the widespread fame of the work. Observe, too, that the conclusion they drew was as to the manner of person that he was; although they did not understand all they might, they saw that he was at least a great prophet, such as Elijah or Elisha (cp. 1 Kings xvii. 17 to 24, 2 Kings xiii. 21), and that the miracle showed the power of God to be operative. In raising the dead to life by his own word, Christ proved that he shared in the life-producing power which belongs to the Creator alone.

(b) The second person whom our Lord brought back to life was the little daughter of Jaira. (See Luke viii. 41 ff. for some details not given by St. Matthew. The two accounts seem at first sight to differ in regard to the time of the little girl's death; but a closer comparison suggests their full agreement. For, as her father left her "at the point of death," he naturally said, when he found Christ, "My daughter is even now dead." Then, while our Lord paused to heal the woman, there came some from Jaira's house to say that his daughter had died after he had set forth.) When Christ came to the house he found the confusion and noise usual in the East, the hired flute-players and mourners, and the friends and neighbors making loud lamentations. He bade them make way for him, "for the little girl is not dead, but sleeps." And they laughed at him, "knowing that she was dead." He meant by the word "sleep," as again when Lazarus was dead, to teach that through him death is not

the end, but has its waking. His command that something be given her to eat is an instance of his thoughtful consideration.

(c) The raising of Lazarus after he had lain in the grave four days is the most wonderful of our Lord's mighty works. In teaching, verses 5 to 17 may be omitted. Verse 4 does not mean, of course, that Lazarus was not to die, but that through Christ's power he should be raised. In verses 25, 26, Jesus teaches in express words that he is the resurrection and the life, which the miracle manifests in act. In verse 27, Martha confesses her faith in him as "the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." Verse 32 shows Mary's faith in his power and love. "Jesus wept," the shortest verse in the Bible, reveals the completeness of our Lord's human nature and his perfect sympathy. Verse 45 shows the effect of the miracle in arousing the people to belief. We should not fail to note that all these miracles manifest our Lord's divine compassion, since he raised those who were much loved, not the rich and powerful.

Miracles, as is often said, are parables in action. Great as our Lord's works are in themselves, they are significant of something further, his continual power for good and his endless love toward all men. Just as the story in a parable points to a truth of which it is the likeness, so the miraculous events in our Lord's life are manifestations of his divine activity in all ages of the world. Thus his healing the blind, deaf, sick, lame, points forward to all that his followers have done in caring for the sick and helpless, and carrying on all the merciful works that are due to his influence. This aspect of his miracles is especially to be thought of in connection with his raising the dead to life. Therein he points forward to the vast work that he wrought through his death and resurrection, bringing life and immortality to light, and

winning for all who believe in and serve him the new life that is not touched by death. Thus we should think of these greatest works of his as showing forth the divine power that is his own, given to him by the Father. Cp. John v. 24 to 27. And this is the teaching of our text. Our Lord's works, then, are not to us remote and strange events, but signs that the almighty and loving Son of God gives health and life to all who have faith in him.

Our Lord raised from the dead the widow's son of Nain.
He raised the little daughter of Jairus.
He raised Lazarus after he had lain four days in the grave.
These mightiest of his works show that he possesses as his own the divine power of giving life.

The next lesson should, as usual, be sketched in advance sufficiently to show its general aim and the direct connection of the first four questions of the *Outline* with the Bible lesson.

LESSON 19

CHRIST THE DIVINE TEACHER

Review. Our Lord's mighty works are signs of his divine power and love, and make him manifest as the Christ, the Son of God.

Text, St. John vii. 46. *Bible lesson,* St. Matt. xxii. 34 to end—Gospel for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Just before the incident related in our Bible lesson occurred, the Master confuted some of the learned Pharisees when they tried to entrap him with their question about tribute; so that "they marveled and left him, and went their way."—Matt. xxii. 15 to 23, Gospel for the Twenty-third Sunday

after Trinity.* And he put the Sadducees to silence when they tried to entangle him with their questions about the resurrection; so that "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (verses 23 to 34). Then the Pharisees consulted together. And one who was skilled in the Old Testament law and the comments of the rabbis upon it asked him a question, which, the lawyer thought, would involve him in a serious difficulty. There are many commands in the Scriptures both about the worship of God and about a man's dealings with other men; and the lawyer thought the Master would commit himself to the statement that some one in particular, perhaps one of the Ten Commandments, is the greatest. This would give his enemies a pretext to speak against him, and assert that he disparaged other parts of the ancient revelation. But he seized upon the principle of love towards God and man as the essence of all goodness. He quoted two verses of the Old Testament (Deut. vi. 5, Levit. xix. 18), and declared that the whole moral teaching of the Old Testament is summed up in them. By fixing upon these two commands the Master not only disarmed his enemies, but also set forth positively the inmost principle of right living. For if we love from the heart we will not sin against God or man, but will keep the whole law of God. Cp. Rom. xiii. 8 to 11, first part of Epistle for the First Sunday in Advent. And so our Lord's discussions with those who opposed him show a mastery of moral truth and a marvelous power in setting it forth.

Starting with this scene in the Master's life, we can proceed, according to the capacity of our pupils, to show the divine wisdom that appears in his teachings and in his method of imparting his thought as his hearers were able to grasp it. As further examples we think at once of the Ser-

* Used for one of the *Bible Lessons on Christian Duty*, as are some other passages referred to here.

mon on the Mount, especially the Golden Rule and the Beatitudes, and of such parables as those of the Good Samaritan and the Unforgiving Servant. Convenient references are the Gospels for the Thirteenth and Twenty-second Sundays after Trinity and for All Saints' Day. See also Matt. vii. 28, 29. In substance his teaching is wonderfully simple and at the same time profound and far-reaching. His method of imparting it drew multitudes to hear him, and exercises an attractive power as strong to-day as then. Its substance and method alike show him to excel immeasurably the greatest of men who have taught righteousness.

After giving his answer, our Lord questioned the Pharisees in turn; and, though they were so learned in the Scriptures, they were unable to answer him. He asked: "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" They replied readily enough from their knowledge of the ancient prophecies, "The son of David." Then the Master quoted Psalm 110: 1, and asked: "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" And they could not answer, neither did they dare try again to confuse him with hard questions. It will be apparent even to younger scholars that our Lord showed himself to possess a deeper knowledge of revealed truth than those learned men. But there is more in this incident than the fact that the Master showed himself abler and wiser than his opponents. The reason they could not answer was because they would not see the truth he came to reveal, that he was the Christ. They knew the prophets had foretold that One should come of the family of David who should be the Messiah, and that he should be greater far than his royal ancestor. By his questions the Master wished to show them that, since they accepted the prophecies, they must look for a Messiah who was more than a human descendant of King David, and therefore they ought not to be offended at his claims. They opposed him, and at last put him to death,

because he presented himself as the Christ. Yet the truth that he, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Christ, was the key to their difficulty. He is the son of David, because he was born of the Virgin Mary, who was descended from David; and he is Lord even of his royal forefather, because he is the Son of God.

This incident shows that the Master is the great teacher of divine truth as well as of righteousness. And it is but an instance of the truth, which we studied in lesson 10, that his manifestation of himself and of the Father who sent him gives us the fullest possible knowledge of God. As examples of his method in revealing truth, we may take, if time permits, the parables of the Sower, the Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep, given in the Gospels for Sexagesima, the Second Sunday after Easter, and the Third Sunday after Trinity. His teaching made people say, "This is the Prophet," "This is the Christ."—John vii. 40, 41. And even the officers whom his enemies sent to arrest him said, "Never man spake like this man." That the Master is our divine teacher of truth and righteousness is the thought which this lesson should impress. Let it be brought out at the conclusion, if no better can be done, but let the aim rather be to teach the lesson throughout in such a way that the children feel and express this for themselves.

The Master answered the question of his enemies, "Which is the great commandment?" in such a way as to confute them and to set forth the true principle of right living.

The substance and the method of his moral teaching show him to excel all teachers of righteousness.

He asked his enemies the question, "What think ye of the Christ?" to which they could not reply, though the answer was given in his manifestation of himself.

His revelation of the Father and his method of presenting it show his mastery of divine truth.

The next lesson has one rather easy question upon the Bible lesson, which ought, however, to be read carefully all through, and one question on the effect upon our Lord's disciples of what they saw him do and heard him say.

LESSON 20

THE FAITH OF OUR LORD'S DISCIPLES IN HIM

Review. Our Lord's teaching of righteousness and his revelation of divine truth show, alike in their substance and their method, that he is the divine Teacher, our Master.

Text, St. John xvi. 30. *Bible lesson,* St. Matt. xvi. 13 to 20—Gospel for St. Peter's Day.

Our Lord's miracles and teaching produced a striking, if not a lasting, impression upon the multitudes who thronged to hear him and to receive the help he gave so freely and lovingly. Those whom he chose to go about with him everywhere received a still deeper impression of his marvelous character, and a strong, abiding faith grew up in their hearts. If we picture to ourselves the intimate, personal association with the Master that his apostles were privileged to enjoy, we shall understand the effect that his words and works, still more his whole life and character, had upon them. For, although he did not often declare in words who he was, he showed it by his life. We are aiming to teach the Creed through the definite, concrete, and, we might almost say, pictorial manifestations of his life, and in this lesson we would show that the apostles came to see the truth of the Incarnation not abstractly and speculatively but through

what they saw and heard of their Lord and Master. Cp. pages 23, 24. We desire to help the children, in a simple way and without much talking about it, to see how people who really consider our Lord's works, teachings and character cannot help believing in him as the Son of God. In teaching, then, let us keep the thought of the personal Lord Christ in the foreground, and the personal loyalty and faith which inevitably arise when he is truly known.

The faith of our Lord's disciples in him was voiced in the great confession made by St. Peter on behalf of all the apostles. This was uttered in reply to questions by which the Master drew out what his disciples already knew and led them on to fuller truth. They had heard four opinions expressed; that he was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, some one of the other prophets. But he would have them, his chosen followers who had seen and heard him all through his ministry, say whom they believed him to be. St. Peter, always impetuous, spoke for all and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Notice the positive statement "Thou art," as contrasted with the previous "some say," and the definite assertion that the person with whom the apostles were speaking face to face was the Christ. The multitudes, even, had seen that he was some wonderful person, a prophet at least, but those who knew him intimately recognized who he really was.

This was not the only acknowledgment of faith in Jesus made during his ministry. When St. Andrew first met with our Lord, he confessed his belief that Jesus would prove to be the Messiah for whom men were hoping. See the text of lesson 13. Later St. Peter said in the name of the twelve, "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God," as St. John vi. 69 should be translated. See also Matt. xiv. 33. But this great confession, made after months of living and working with Jesus, was a solemn assertion of

full belief in him as the Christ, the Son of God. During these months the apostles' knowledge of him had been deepened and their love for him strengthened, as his personality had an ever-increasing influence upon their minds and hearts, until finally there resulted this climax of faith and this confession of him as their personal Lord Christ. Other confessions, coming still later in his ministry, are those of Martha in St. John xi. 27, and of his apostles in our text. Our Lord marks the significance of the confession made by St. Peter by words of warm commendation. He admits as solemnly as his apostles asserted, that he is the Son of God. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"; that is, it is not an opinion coming from other men or a notion arising in the imagination, but a truth made known by God's working in the heart. And since this representative man personally believes in and confesses him, our Lord can build up the spiritual temple, his Church, St. Peter being the first of the many living stones used in the building. Cp. 1 Pet. ii. 4 to 7. Full faith in Jesus as the Christ, based upon personal knowledge of him and openly confessed, is the response man must make to his revelation in order that his kingdom may be established. With this saying of our Lord's agrees, therefore, St. Paul's assertion: "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. iii. 11. See also Ephes. ii. 20 with context. The last verses of our Bible lesson are not essential to our present theme; but in brief "the keys" denote that to St. Peter as representing all the apostles, just as later to them all expressly (Matt. xviii. 18, xxviii. 19, 20, John xx. 23), authority is given to admit men into the Church and to declare what is required of men by God or forbidden. It will be evident that Roman Catholic claims based upon this "promise to St. Peter" are wholly irrelevant to the true meaning of the passage, as any good

commentary will show in detail. Our present concern is to observe that we may well think of the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" as addressed to each of us by our Lord. Yielding to God's guidance, we should learn from our Lord's manifestation of himself to recognize him fully as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and to say, "We believe that thou camest forth from God."

The personal knowledge of Christ which his disciples gained from being with him led to firm faith.

This faith is expressed in St. Peter's confession on behalf of all the apostles that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This solemn assertion of belief in their Master as their personal Lord Christ marks a climax in the faith of the apostles, and is solemnly accepted and commended by our Lord.

The next lesson brings before us a scene of glory in our Lord's earthly life. The second question in the *Outline* calls attention to the marvelous change in his appearance and to the divine voice bearing witness of him.

LESSON 21

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Review. Those who companied with our Lord came to have complete faith in him as the Christ, the Son of God perceiving from his life who he was.

Text, 2 St. Peter i. 17. *Bible lesson*, St. Luke ix. 28 to 37—Gospel for the Transfiguration.

About a week after St. Peter's confession of faith there came a manifestation of our Lord's glory. The scene itself

and its meaning we should aim to bring vividly before our pupils. While our Lord was praying upon a mountain his face was changed in appearance, so that it "shone like the sun," and his clothing became "white as the light."—Matt. xvii. 2. And there appeared two men in glory talking with him, Moses, through whom the Law was given, and Elijah, one of the greatest of the prophets. The three apostles who accompanied our Lord were borne down with sleep, but having waked they saw his glory and the two men that stood with him. St. Peter, as at other times, speaks first, though here "not knowing what he said." He desires to detain the great lawgiver and prophet when they are about to go away, and so proposes to make booths which might serve at least as temporary abiding places for them and the Master. While he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, filling them with awe and fear, because a cloud was a symbol of God's presence. Cp. Exod. xix. 9, 16, xxxiii. 9. Then there came a voice from the cloud, assuring them that Jesus is the beloved Son of God, and bidding them believe whatever he should tell them. After God the Father had thus spoken, "Jesus was found alone." This is a symbol of the truth that he is the one Saviour of us all. For the appearance of Moses and Elijah by the side of Jesus symbolized the Law and the Prophets as leading up to and being fulfilled in the Gospel; and their departure, leaving him alone, denoted that the old dispensation has passed away, leaving Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and man. These points we may emphasize in describing the scene.

In bringing out its deeper meaning we may notice that Moses and Elijah talked with our Lord "of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," that is, of his departure from life through his passion and crucifixion. Of this he had been forewarning his disciples during the week before the transfiguration; and almost directly after

that event "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." —Luke ix. 51. His death, then, was not a fate which he could not escape, but a great work which he was entering upon of his own free will out of love to men. And so the transfiguration served to calm and encourage the apostles, who had been told of his approaching sufferings and death, and to strengthen their faith in him as the Christ, the Son of God, just when the end was looming up so darkly. That he thus "received from the Father honor and glory," shows us the majesty that belongs to him of right, and deepens our faith in him. And we should especially ponder this: an ascension into heaven from the mount of the transfiguration would have been such an end of his earthly life as Jesus deserved, since he was perfect as man, wholly free from sin, and unwearying in his loving work for men. Death, on the contrary, is the end that is fitting for the fallen race of Adam, and the death of the cross was appointed for the worst criminals. Yet instead of ascending into heaven while he was praying upon the mount, he remained with his disciples when the glory had departed, and freely faced the death upon Calvary that freed us all from the stain and the bondage of sin. If he had departed from the earth at his transfiguration, he would have left mankind worse off than if he had never come; for he would have given us a perfect example, but no power to follow it. Whereas by dying, rising from the dead, and ascending to heaven in the body in which he had suffered and triumphed, he conquered sin and death, and won for us new life and power from on high. By choosing to depart through death instead of going alone to heaven he takes many with him to glory. Cp. Heb. ii. 10.

The transfiguration shows forth the true glory of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and is a symbol of the truth that he is our only Saviour.

It shows his approaching death to be a great work freely entered upon out of love toward us, that he might win for us new life and spiritual power.

The next lesson brings us to the deeply important subject, who our Lord says he is. The passages from St. John that are referred to should be studied by the teacher in Westcott, *The Gospel of St. John*; and it should be observed how our Lord led his hearers on step by step to understand his teaching about himself. See that the children know just where to find the Bible lessons.

LESSON 22

OUR LORD SAYS THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD

Review. The faith of the apostles in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, which had been aroused by his miracles and teachings, and solemnly confessed, was further strengthened by his transfiguration.

Text, St. Luke xx. 13. *Bible lessons:* St. John xiv. 1 to 15—Gospel for St. Philip and St. James's Day; and St. Mark xiv. 61 to 65—part of Gospel for Monday before Easter.

One of our Lord's parables, from which our text is taken, is about the lord of the vineyard and his beloved son. See Luke xx. 9 to 17 for the story. The first part of it represents God's sending one prophet after another to his people, that he might receive of them, to whom he had given the privileges of his covenant and the knowledge of his will, the fruits of faith and righteousness. And they rejected the prophets, persecuting and killing them. At last, the parable says, the lord of the vineyard sent his beloved son, his heir, who is

contrasted strongly with the bondservants previously sent; and the husbandmen cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. This represents the fact that God sent his only and beloved Son, after he had sent all the prophets; and that the Jewish rulers, moved with envy and desirous of maintaining their own authority, "crucified the Lord of glory." In this parable, then, our Lord teaches his unique greatness as the only Son of God, inasmuch as he likens himself to the beloved son of the lord of the vineyard, while he compares all the prophets to bondservants.

Our first Bible lesson is from our Lord's parting discourse with his disciples just before his death. They were troubled at his warning that he was about to be killed, and he spoke words of comfort and of encouragement to faith. "Believe in God, believe also in me," he said, so declaring that the Christian ought to have faith in him no less than in God the Father, and plainly implying that he himself is divine. And then he spoke of heavenly mansions, which he would prepare, and into which he would receive his disciples. To have this hope, it is evident, they must recognize him as Lord, and have full faith in him. With this saying we should compare, moreover, the statement that he knew "he came forth from God and goeth to God."—John xiii. 3. See also John viii. 42, xvi. 27 to 33. Furthermore he declared that he is "the way, the truth and the life," through whom alone men come to the Father and know the Father. The full meaning of these words is suggested by Hymn 425. He is the way, inasmuch as through him we have forgiveness and access to the Father, from whom sin excludes us. See Heb. x. 19, 20, Ephes. ii. 18. He is the truth, who alone knows the Father and reveals him to us. See Matt. xi. 27, in Gospel for St. Matthias's Day. He is the life, who unites us with the eternal and divine life through our union with him. See John xv. 1 to 12, Gospel for St. Mark's Day. This declara-

tion leads on again to St. Philip's request, "Show us the Father," and to the reply, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." By this our Lord teaches that he manifests to us the infinite divine nature of the Father through his words and works. These points at least we can make plain to our pupils, and so enable them to see that our Lord deliberately and expressly states that he is the Son of God.

We may add his sayings in St. John v. 17, 18, x. 22 to 40, and viii. 46 to end, Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent. In the last we may notice especially the following points. He asserted that he is sinless, and this has never been true of any mere man. Then he continued the discussion until he declared, "if a man keep my saying he shall never see death." This, as his enemies recognized, involved a claim that he is far greater than Abraham and all the prophets; for they are dead, and so are whole generations of their disciples, yet his followers shall never die. Finally came his solemn declaration, "Before Abraham was born, I am," an assertion of his eternal existence as God. The Jews so understood it, and, not believing, they attempted to stone him to death for blasphemy.

In our Bible lesson from St. Mark we hear our Lord, arrested and brought to trial before his enemies, acknowledging that he is "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed." Thus it was because he presented himself as the Son of God that he was hated by the rulers and condemned to death. His claim requires a response one way or the other from everyone who learns about him; either such rejection as he suffered from those who wished to stone him to death, and who caused him to be crucified, or else loyal acceptance and faithful service.

Our Lord spoke of the prophets as God's servants, but of himself as God's beloved Son.

He told his disciples to have faith in him such as they had in the Father, and to recognize that through him alone men can come to the Father and know the Father.

He declared himself to be sinless, the source of life, and eternally God.

He was put to death at the last because he claimed to be the Son of God.

REVIEW

The next hour should be given to a review of lessons 10 to 22 inclusive, and should aim not only to fix in the children's memories what they have learned, but also to make the truth that the Son of God "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven" a more living reality than ever. Bring out, therefore, on the one hand, those features of the Gospel story which show our Lord to be truly the Son of God, such as his mighty and loving works, his boundless wisdom, the faith he inspired in his followers, the assertions he made concerning himself; and, on the other hand, those features which show him to be truly man, such as his birth, his temptation, his joy in the happiness of others, his weariness, his painful life, his sorrow at the grave of Lazarus. Thus make it clear that his life on earth manifested him to be truly divine and truly human, so that we rightly believe in him as the eternal Son of God, very God of very God, who "was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Being perfectly God, he has boundless power to help us, being perfectly man, he can fully sympathize with us; and so the Incarnate Son of God is the one Saviour of men.

In lesson 23 we take up a subject that is expressly spoken of in the Creed, the sufferings endured on our behalf by

our Saviour. The children should aim not only to learn as fully as they can the story of his sufferings, but still more should try to feel the love that led him to endure so much for us.

LESSON 23

SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE

Review. Our Lord declares that he is the Son of God, through whom alone we truly know the Father, and that he is entitled to our faith and our loyal service.

Text, 1 St. Peter iii. 18. *Bible lesson*, St. Mark xv. 1 to 22—first part of Gospel for Tuesday before Easter.

Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, had authority to put criminals to death. And so the enemies of our Lord, angered at his claim to the faith of men, but having no legal power to inflict death upon him themselves, brought him before Pilate like a criminal, and accused him of claiming to be King of the Jews. Our Lord acknowledged himself to be a king, meaning that he was the Messiah, not that he had any designs against the Roman government, or aimed to rule by force.—John xviii. 33 to 39. Pilate saw that there was no ground for such a charge as the Jewish priests made, and tried to release him.—Luke xxiii. 1 to 26. But when he could not persuade the people to ask for the release of Jesus, he had not courage to do justice himself, fearing lest he should be accused to the Emperor of letting a man go who was trying to make himself king. And so, to protect himself and please the mob, he handed over an innocent man to the most cruel death. He let the rulers and the people have their way, and ordered Jesus to be scourged and crucified.

The mention of Pilate's name in the Creed gives a mark of the time when our Saviour was put to death, and so helps

to impress upon us the definite actuality of all he endured for us, which we must try to make real to the children. The scourge was a whip with leather lashes loaded with lead or iron. It cut the flesh to the bone, so that sometimes scourging caused death. The soldiers further tortured our Saviour with the crown of thorns and by their blows and spitting. And then they led him forth to crucify him, making him bear his cross until he could carry its weight no longer. Even so brief a recital as this of our Lord's sufferings brings their intensity before us, and reflection upon the narratives of the several Gospels ever deepens our sense that the bodily pain he endured was beyond all that we can imagine.

More dreadful still was the anguish of his soul under the injustice of his illegal trial, the mockery of the soldiers, the hatred of the people he came to save, the treachery of one disciple, the desertion of the rest, the denial of St. Peter, the grief of those who loved him. Try to think, for instance, of the mob crying out against him, and you have a picture of cruel hatred that might bear down the strongest courage. And this, perhaps, was among the least of his mental sufferings. Greatest of all was the burden of our sins. He grieved for every man's sins because he knew how hateful they are to God; for he loved men, and knew that sin is their destruction. An earnest teacher will ponder very thoughtfully how best to present this familiar and moving story so as to reach the children. Their hearts will be closed by a certain natural shrinking, unless his sufferings are described reverently and with restraint; and yet we must aim to make the words "he suffered" have the full meaning to the children that the Gospel story gives. Perhaps it is not usually so needful to dwell upon his bodily pain as upon those aspects of his sufferings which require more reflection. However this may be, if we try to feel deeply and honestly for ourselves how real were the sufferings of our best and most

loving Friend, and to meditate devoutly upon the Gospel story, we shall find a way to bring our theme home to those whom we teach.

Above all we should endeavor to present this lesson in such a way as to deepen the children's love for our Saviour. He "suffered for sins," he who was without spot of sin for us who are all sinful, "that he might bring us to God." Remembering this, the wickedness of our sins, the greatness of his love, and its power to draw us to God will be thoughts that grow and live in our minds, as we contemplate what our Saviour endured on our behalf. We should lay stress also on the thought that his sufferings assure us he is truly man, ready to sympathize with us in all our trials. The familiar practical lesson, too, that we should willingly bear the cross, should not be passed over. Cp. Matt. xvi. 24.

Our Saviour, like a criminal, was brought before Pilate, who, too weak to do justice, delivered him to be scourged and crucified.

Our Saviour endured most cruel tortures of body.

He suffered the bitterest anguish of soul.

All this was endured for our sakes and because of our sins by our Lord, who as the Son of man has perfect sympathy, as the Son of God has absolute power to help us.

NOTE.—If the longer list of references given in the *Outline* is used, the following topics may precede the above: the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal and arrest, the examination before Annas, the trial before the Sanhedrin, St. Peter's denial. And the trial before Pilate and before Herod may be described more fully than is indicated above.

The next lesson is very closely connected with this, and in preparing for it the children should again aim both to learn

the story of the Cross and to feel the meaning to us of our Saviour's sufferings and death. The teacher is advised to read Gore, *The Creed of the Christian*, sections on "Sin and Redemption" and "The Atonement," and in Sanday and Headlam's *Commentary on Romans*, the note on "The Death of Christ considered as a Sacrifice," pages 91 to 94. The Bible passages referred to in the longer list in our *Outline* should be read without fail, and also the following: Mark x. 45; John x. 11, 17, 18; Matt. xxvi. 28; Rom. v. 6 to 20; Col. i. 14, 20; and the Comfortable Words in the Communion Service.

LESSON 24

WAS CRUCIFIED FOR US

Review. Our Saviour was unjustly condemned, scourged, mocked and beaten, betrayed, deserted, denied, and all because of men's sins.

Text, Rom. v. 8. *Bible lesson*, St. Mark xv. 22 to 40—last part of Gospel for Tuesday before Easter.

Our Saviour's death upon the Cross is the climax of his toilsome life and of the sad events of Holy Week. After his unjust condemnation he was taken by the soldiers through the streets, followed by crowds and also by women who lamented for him. They brought him to a place outside the city, called Golgotha or Calvary, meaning "the skull," either because it was the place of public execution or because it was a rounded hill. When they reached the place, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, which would act as a drug to deaden the fearful pain of crucifixion; but he would not drink it, because "he had need of the full use of his human faculties, and the pain which was before him belonged to the

cup which his Father's will had appointed, of which he would abate nothing." And they crucified him. The soldiers did the cruel work, but the guilt lay at the door of the Jewish people; and not there alone, but at the door of our sins. Crucifixion was an intensely painful death, the victim being bound and nailed to the cross to suffer for hours from wounds and thirst and the racking of his whole body. It was also the most abhorred of all punishments, because it could be inflicted, according to the Roman law, only upon slaves and the worst criminals, never upon a man who had the rights of a citizen; and according to the Jewish law it made the victim accursed. This is pictured, as we might say, by the fact that our Saviour was put to death between two robbers, and so included among desperate criminals. Yet when he was crucified our Lord said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Over his head a whited piece of wood was placed, as the custom was, on which was written the charge upon which he had been condemned. This gave him the title that was rightly his, but gave it in mockery. And the people who passed by on the highway near derided him both with gestures and words, and those who had brought about his death jeered at him, taunting him with the charges made against him in his trial before the Jewish authorities. Their mocking was the harder for him to endure because his own self-restraint and his resolution to complete his sacrifice alone forbade him to descend from the cross and overwhelm his enemies. Even the crucified robber reviled him. Still harder for him to bear was the sorrow of his disciples and the faithful women, and of the beloved disciple and his mother, who stood by the cross. And heaviest of all was the burden of our sins, and the awful sense of their power to separate men from God. His agony forced from him the loud cry, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Even this was

scoffed at by some who heard it; though one of the bystanders, taking pity upon him, tried to relieve his thirst.

Six hours he hung there, the last three hours, from noon to the time of the evening sacrifice, being hours of darkness. At the last, having called out with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," he died. And the veil of the temple, hiding the Holy of Holies, was torn in two, signifying that the day of the Old Testament sacrifices was past, and complete access to the Father is now opened to all believers by the one perfect Sacrifice. At his death even the officer who had carried out the sentence was convinced that he was innocent and divine. This is but a part of the story of the Cross, but so much at least we may aim to bring out of our Bible lesson, using also some details from the other Gospels.

To tell the full meaning of our Saviour's passion and death would be to tell the whole story of the Bible and of all Christian experience; but we can try to show that it proclaims God's righteousness and his love toward us, our sinfulness, and our Saviour's redeeming sacrifice.* Let us connect each thought with some feature of the story of the Cross, so that the personal lesson may always come to mind whenever we think of the crucifixion. Our Saviour was publicly executed like a desperate criminal, exposed to the mocking of the crowd. He was, as it were, lifted up for the whole world to see. This should signify to us that God's righteousness and love were openly placarded before all men. Our righteous heavenly Father cannot pass over our sins as if right and wrong were of no account; they can be forgiven only if they are atoned for and repented of. But his love is so great in spite of our sins that, in order to save us, he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."—Rom. viii. 32.

* Fuller teaching on the Atonement is given in *Bible Lessons on the Sacraments* in the lessons on the Holy Communion.

Cp. Gen. xxii. 1 to 19, John iii. 16. Truly, as our text tells us, God proves his unmerited love toward us in that, sinners as we still were, Christ died for us.

And who was the Person who hung there upon the Cross? He was the only-begotten Son of God, who became man for our salvation. This familiar truth will perhaps impress us as it should, if we compare our Saviour's death with the most heroic instances of self-sacrifice that we can find. Anyone who looks for heroic deeds will find many examples, in histories or in the daily papers, of noble attempts to save life even at the expense of the rescuer's own. But when we compare the Person who gave his life, the manner in which he gave it, and the unworthiness of those for whom he died, with the corresponding features in the noblest stories of human self-sacrifice, we see that our Saviour paid for our sins a ransom of priceless worth. Cp. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. If our sins required such a ransom, they deserve no less than death, yes, no less than what our Saviour suffered for us. We see their utter sinfulness, and learn to hate them, if we reflect upon the cost of their forgiveness, the death of the Son of God, our loving Saviour.

Our Saviour suffered with forgiving patience. Cp. Isa. liii., 1 Pet. ii. 22 to 25. This impresses upon us the truth that his death was a perfectly free act of sacrifice. He regards it as a service, the climax of a life of service.—Mark x. 45. "At the end of the avenue stood a cross, and the Saviour of men walked up to it as if it had been a crown." His perfect human life was voluntarily offered to God, that atonement might be made for all sins. Thereby we obtain pardon for the past, deliverance from the sense of guilt, and free access to God; and are saved, not indeed from suffering and from bodily death, but from the spiritual death which is the full penalty of sin. And so he made once for all a full and perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Outside the city in a public place and between two robbers our Saviour was nailed to the cross to suffer and die.

He endured the mocking of the crowd, the chief priests and the robber, the grief of his disciples and his mother, and the burden of all the sins of men.

Six hours he suffered, the last three hours being hours of darkness, and then completed his perfect sacrifice by his death.

The public execution of our blessed Redeemer, exposed to the mocking crowds, proclaims openly the righteousness of God and the depth of God's love.

That the Person who died on the cross was the Son of God proclaims the magnitude of our sins.

His patient, voluntary endurance of death impresses upon us the truth that his death was a sacrifice, the one perfect sacrifice for all sins.

The next lesson shows that our Saviour really was dead after his crucifixion, that he was buried, and that in his spirit he went to the realm of the dead. The teacher should read John xix. 31 to end, Mark xv. 42 to end, Luke xxiii. 50 to end and Acts ii. 22 to 32, as well as our Bible lesson. It will be noticed that, in order to make lessons 23, 24 and 25 of more equal length, the proper division of the articles of the Creed has been departed from in the headings.

LESSON 25

DEAD AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

Review. Our Saviour was crucified for us, showing us the righteousness and the love of God and our sinfulness, and offering himself as the one perfect sacrifice for all sins.

Text, 1 St. Peter iii. 19. *Bible lesson*, St. Matt. xxvii. 57 to end—Gospel for Easter-Even.

All the Evangelists tell us that our Saviour died upon the Cross, and St. John (xix. 31 to 36) adds details which make the fact of the death indisputable. The Lord's side was pierced by the long, heavy lance of one of the soldiers, when, coming to break the legs of those crucified, they saw that Jesus was dead already; and this is solemnly affirmed as having been seen by the apostle with his own eyes. St. Mark (xv. 44, 45) mentions also that Pilate ordered the body to be given to Joseph only after the officer in charge of the execution had explicitly reported that Jesus was dead. That Christ died for our sins is an essential part of the gospel message (1 Cor. xv. 3), and is continually shown forth by the Holy Communion (1 Cor. xi. 26).

When the end of that first Good Friday was near, Joseph of Arimathæa, a rich and prominent man, had the courage to go to Pilate and beg the body of Jesus. His request being granted, he took down the body from the cross, assisted probably by others who loved and revered the Crucified. Nicodemus joined in caring for the body, bringing a great quantity of precious spices in which it might be wrapped. They swathed the body in the new linen cloth, between the folds of which the spices were freely crumbled, bound it with strips of cloth, and covered the face. Then they laid the body in Joseph's new tomb, which was hewn in the rock in a garden near the place of the crucifixion. They rolled a great stone to the mouth of the tomb, and went away. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James saw where the Lord's body was laid, and then they too went away to prepare spices and ointments; for they wished to do their part in caring for the Lord's body, and to use ointments in addition to the spices which Nicodemus had brought. As it was

"the day of the preparation," that is, the Friday of Passover week, it would be illegal to do any work after night had come on, because that Saturday was the Sabbath and a great festival. And so the burial of our Lord had to be quickly attended to by Joseph, and the women could not perform their loving task until the Sabbath was over. Accordingly they all went away, and through the first Easter-Even our Lord's body lay in the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes and shut fast by the great stone. Not only was it thus secured and quiet in death, but furthermore the stone was sealed on Easter-Even by the Jewish officials, and a guard of Roman soldiers was posted by Pilate's permission before the tomb, so that none of the friends of Jesus could take away his body and say he was alive. We can imagine the sadness of those who performed the last offices for our Lord when they went away leaving his body in the tomb, the grief of the women, and the gloom and despondency of the apostles and other disciples, to whom it seemed that all they had been working and hoping for had ended in failure.

Upon the cross our Saviour said to the penitent thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." And at the last he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These sayings imply that, although his body was to be laid in the grave dead, his human soul would continue to live. From Good Friday afternoon until Easter morning his soul was absent from his body, but he did not cease to live or to be active on behalf of mankind. For in his spirit "he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," that is, to the dead who are detained in God's keeping until the Judgment Day. Cp. 1 Pet. iv. 6. The word translated "prison" means strictly a guard-house or place of detention rather than a place of punishment. Accordingly we believe "he descended into hell" or "went to the place of departed spirits." See the rubric before the Apostles' Creed. The

word "hell" does not mean in the Creed the place of torment, as it does in Psalm 9: 17 and some other Bible passages; but it means, as in Psalm 16: 11, Acts ii. 31 and other passages, paradise, the place of rest and peace, where those who have gone from among us now are. Thither our Saviour went in his human soul to proclaim the gospel to the dead.

That our Lord "tasted death for every man," really died as every man must die, shows us that he experienced the utmost that is our lot, and will be ready to feel for us and support us when our last hour comes. And since his soul, parted from the body, went to the world of souls, as our souls must go, we need not fear our own departure to the place of rest, nor dread the thought of the journey taken by friends who go before us.

Our Saviour died upon the Cross as truly as every man must die.

His body was buried in Joseph's tomb, wrapped in grave-clothes, secured by the stone, the seal and the guard, and left by his despairing disciples in the quiet of death. His soul went to the place of departed spirits to tell them of his redemptive work.

To know that our Saviour himself died and departed to the other world gives us comfort when death comes upon us or upon those we love.

The next lesson should associate the story of the first Easter morning so firmly with the words, "the third day he rose again," that they will always bring to mind the tremendous event by which the chains of death were forever broken. In preparing the lesson the two passages found in the Prayer Book should be used by all the class; the others may be assigned to individuals. The teacher should also read Matt. xxviii. 5 to 9 and Luke xxiv. 1 to 13. Lessons 26 and 27

may readily be combined, and so may 28 and 29; it is well, however, to give the children a full survey of the accounts of the resurrection, if time allows, aiming to show them in a simple, positive way, without raising difficulties or making long explanations of our aim, the strength of the evidence for our Lord's rising.

LESSON 26

THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN

Review. Our Saviour, having been condemned by Pilate, scourged and crucified, died upon the Cross. His body was placed in the tomb by his despairing disciples, the stone was sealed, and a guard posted; while in his spirit he went and preached to the spirits in paradise.

Text, Rom. i. 4. *Bible lessons:* (a) St. Matt. xxviii. 1 to 5 (not in the Prayer Book); (b) St. Mark xvi. 1 to 9—second Gospel for Easter-day; (c) St. John xx. 1 to 11—first Gospel for Easter-day; (d) St. John xx. 11 to 19 (not in the Prayer Book); (e) St. Matt. xxviii. 9 to 16 (not in the Prayer Book).

Sorrow turned into joy, defeat into victory, death into life, is the message of the first Easter morning. If this message is to come home to us, we must first bring the story of that happy morning fully and clearly before our minds by studying the Gospel narrative. The four Gospels give us accounts derived from a number of eye-witnesses, and the narratives have that variety in detail together with an unpremeditated harmony in the whole which is the strongest guarantee that testimony is honest and accurate. We cannot go into the nice questions, interesting as they are, of the relation and harmony of the several accounts, which are treated in any good Life of Christ; our concern is to give the children a

vivid impression of the story in its main features, making it, if possible, as full and living as it is in the Gospels. It is necessary here only to suggest how our material should be arranged, and incidentally to comment on a few passages. (a) Very early indeed there was the earthquake, and the angel rolled back the stone, terrifying the soldiers so that they forsook their post. (b) When the women came, they saw the stone was rolled away; and entering the tomb they saw an angel, who told them that Jesus was risen, and bade them tell the disciples. Angels announced the resurrection as they had announced the birth of our Lord. The women went quickly on their errand, and, being amazed and awed, said nothing to anyone by the way. (c) Meanwhile Mary Magdalene had turned back without entering the tomb, it would appear, as soon as she saw the stone was moved, and had found St. Peter and St. John. They, running to the sepulchre, found it empty. The grave-clothes were lying in order, showing that the body had not been hastily carried away by anyone. (d) When the two disciples had gone to their homes, Mary Magdalene remained and saw two angels, and then the risen Master. Blinded by her tears, she thought him to be the gardener until he spoke to her by name and she looked directly at him. This was the first appearance of our risen Lord. His saying, "Take not hold on me," indicates that he would not be with his disciples in the same way as before his death, but, after showing himself to them at various times in his glorified body, would ascend to the Father. He speaks of them as "my brethren" because, after his divine nature was fully manifested by his resurrection, there was no danger of their thinking him to be only man. They and we are sons of God by creation, and share, moreover, the Lord's resurrection life. But the Father of all men is first, in the highest sense, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and we have

life through him alone. With this accord his words, "my Father and your Father, my God and your God." (e) While the other women were on their way to tell the disciples, as the angel had bidden them, Jesus appeared to them, and told them he would show himself to his disciples in Galilee. Some of the soldiers meanwhile reported to the chief priests what had taken place, and the latter bribed them to declare that the body of Jesus had been stolen while they slept, a statement plainly absurd.

One great meaning of Jesus' resurrection is set forth by our text: he was visibly designated, or declared, with might to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, which is the crowning miracle of all, a signal manifestation of divine power. His rising confirmed and fixed unchangeably his disciples' faith in him as the Son of God, when his death had well nigh overwhelmed them with grief and despair. In all the story of that first Easter morning we notice sadness and despondency in the women and in the apostles, and before the great event happened they showed no expectation that their Master would rise again. But sorrow was quickly turned into joy and despondency into belief by their finding the tomb empty with the grave-clothes lying in order, by receiving the messages of the angels, and especially by their presently seeing the risen Lord. This faith in Jesus risen, which sprang up from the observed facts of the great day, should be ours; and with it a mighty joy at the victory of our Lord over death. Because Jesus rose, we, too, are sure that he is the Son of God; otherwise he could not have conquered death by living, as before he had conquered Satan by resisting, disease by healing, error by his teaching, and sin by dying. And so the resurrection is the crowning proof that he is the true life of all men, himself sharing in the life and the life-giving power of the Father. His miracles and teaching were signs showing who he is;

but his rising on the third day is the greatest sign of all that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of men. Cp. Matt. xii. 38 to 41, John ii. 18 to 23.

The story of the first Easter morning brings us the message of sorrow turned into joy, defeat into victory, death into life.

The Resurrection established unwaveringly the faith of our Lord's disciples in him as the Son of God, and assures us that he is our mighty Saviour.

The next lesson continues the Easter story, and brings out another of its meanings. The teacher should read John xx. 19 to 24, Gospel for the First Sunday after Easter. Some additional passages illustrating the truth that Christ died and rose again "according to the Scriptures" are: John ii. 22, xx. 9, Acts xvii. 2, 3, xxvi. 22, 23, 1 Cor. xv. 4.

LESSON 27

THE EVENING OF THE FIRST EASTER-DAY

Review. Our Lord rose from the dead on the third day, and thereby showed himself mightily to be the Son of God.

Text, Acts x. 40, 41. *Bible lessons:* St. Luke xxiv. 13 to 36—Gospel for Monday in Easter-week; St. Luke xxiv. 36 to 49—Gospel for Tuesday in Easter-week.

On the afternoon of the first Easter-day Cleopas and another of Jesus' disciples walked out from the city to Emmaus, a village about eight miles away. Their hearts were full of the sad ending to their Master's life, and as they walked they spoke together of all that had been done to him. Someone came up with them and walked beside them, but

they did not recognize him as anyone they knew. He asked them what this was they were talking about as they walked along so sadly. They were surprised that anyone, even a passing stranger, should need to ask, for things so notable had happened that they must be in the minds and on the lips of everyone. "What kind of things?" the stranger asked, leading them thus to tell him, as they willingly did, of their Master. He was a mighty prophet, they said, "and we *had* hoped that he was the one who should redeem Israel." But he had been crucified, and their hopes had given way to despair and grief; they must have been mistaken in thinking him more than a prophet and in believing him to be the Messiah. Still, there was this much encouragement, some women of their company had found the tomb empty, and had been told by angels that he was alive; and some of the men had seen the tomb empty as the women said. "But him they saw not." Then the stranger began to teach them from the Scriptures that it was necessary the Messiah should suffer, and that they ought to recognize the sufferings and death of Jesus as evidence that he was the Christ. When they came to Emmaus, the stranger began to take leave of them, and would have departed, but they urged him to remain. And then at supper, as he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them, they recognized their Master who had been crucified. Thereupon he disappeared from their sight, leaving them convinced that he was the Messiah and still alive, and that their hopes had not been in vain.

They returned at once to Jerusalem, full of joy and enthusiasm, their whole outlook completely changed from the sadness with which they had gone forth, and came to the eleven and the other disciples, ready to tell their wonderful story. They were greeted with the news that the Lord had appeared to St. Peter, the apostle who had denied his Lord and was most in need of consolation. This appearance of

the risen Christ is not further described, but St. Paul mentions it in 1 Cor. xv. 5 as a most important evidence of the resurrection. It seems to have occurred after Cleopas and his friend had started for Emmaus, and before the disciples at Jerusalem assembled. ("The eleven" is used to denote the apostles, although St. Thomas was absent, that being their number since the death of Judas.)

While the two disciples were still hearing and telling of these great events, Jesus himself suddenly appeared in the gathering, though the doors were barred. The disciples were terrified, thinking they saw a ghost. Jesus convinced them of his identity, showing them the wounds in his hands and feet, by which they might know him to be the Master of whom they supposed the crucifixion had robbed them forever. And then he convinced them of the reality of his body, bidding them touch him and feel that he was actually with them, and eating before them when for joy they could hardly believe the evidence of eye and hand. He plainly wished them to be sure of the reality of his risen life, and not to think that they saw merely the ghost of a dead Master; for that would have had no effect in convincing them of his continued existence and active power. He appeared in such ways that there could be no doubt he was truly living, possessing indeed a new and glorified life. His body was the same in which he had lived among men and died on the cross; it still bore the wounds made by the nails and the spear. And yet it was changed and glorified; it was not limited by such hindrances as closed doors; death had no dominion over it. It was, nevertheless, real, so that it could be touched as well as seen, and could be used, as in the symbolical acts of eating and of giving food to the disciples. This truth is known by us through the witness of those "who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

When the Lord had proved that it was he himself who

appeared, and that he was really living, he reminded his disciples of what he had told them beforehand concerning his sufferings, death and resurrection, and showed that all this had been prophesied of the Christ. From the use which the apostles made of Psalms 2 and 16 we may suppose that our Lord spoke of those passages as foretelling his resurrection. Cp. Acts ii. 25 to 32, xiii. 32 to 38.

Because Jesus rose from the dead we are sure that we too shall rise. Cp. John xi. 25, 1 Cor. xv. 20 to 24. One Man has come back from the far country to which we all must journey, and has returned in glory. And he who has done so is our Saviour, who conquered death for us no less than for himself. His rising gives us an assurance that we shall rise, such as we could not have from any reasonings or hopes of our own, or even, we may say, from promises of Holy Scripture. And so the outlook of a Christian, when his friends die or he thinks of his own death, is as different from the sorrow of the world as the joy of the disciples when their Master appeared was from their despondency before he rose.

Toward evening of the first Easter-day the risen Lord appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus.

He appeared to St. Peter.

In the evening he appeared to ten of the apostles, and the disciples assembled with them, and showing them his hands and side convinced them that he was truly risen. He showed them that his sufferings, death and resurrection had been foretold in the Old Testament.

Because our Saviour truly rose in his glorified body, we are sure that we too shall rise.

The next lesson deals with the appearances of our Lord after the day of his rising, and with the new life we have in him. The teacher should study more details of the story

than are touched upon here, but should not use too many in class, nor attempt to bring out at any one time more than one or two of the main ethical teachings of the resurrection.

LESSON 28

LATER APPEARANCES OF OUR RISEN LORD

Review. The appearances of the Lord to his disciples on the resurrection day perfectly convinced them that he was truly alive in his glorified body.

Text, Acts i. 3. *Bible lessons:* (a) St. John xx. 24 to end—Gospel for St. Thomas's Day; (b) St. John xxi. 1 to 15 (not in the Prayer Book); (c) St. Matt. xxviii. 16 to end (not in the Prayer Book); (d) 1 Cor. xv. 1 to 12—Epistle for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

(a) St. Thomas was not present with the other apostles when our Lord appeared to them and showed them by his wounds that he was their Master who had been crucified. They told St. Thomas the glad news, but he could not feel sure it was true. Then on the Sunday after Easter-day, when the disciples were again gathered together with shut doors, Jesus came. He stood suddenly in their midst and greeted them, and, turning to Thomas, with tender consideration for the weakness and doubt of one who was willing and desirous to believe, he bade him touch his hands and his side. He knew what questionings St. Thomas had expressed, and recalled the words he had used. This should remind us that our risen Lord is always present, though unseen, even when people doubt or deny him. St. Thomas did not wait to touch Christ, but at once gave joyful utterance to his faith in him, addressing him as "my Lord and my God." He not only recognized his Master as being truly

present before his eyes, but also was completely convinced that his Lord was more than man. It was a "sublime, instantaneous confession, won from doubt," that the risen Lord is God. The Master accepted this assertion of his divinity as a true expression of faith. And he declared that they are blessed who, though they do not see him, yet believe on the testimony of good witnesses. Let us therefore remember that the apostles taught, the Gospels were written, the Church teaches now, in order that we may "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing may have life through his name."

(b) The third time that Jesus manifested himself to a number of his disciples gathered together was at the lake of Gennesaret, while they were fishing. They knew him on account of the wonderful draught of fishes which they took at his command, reminding them of the like sign he had wrought before. Cp. lesson 16. And he showed the reality of his presence by giving them fish and bread, an action beautiful in itself and a symbol of his imparting new life and spiritual sustenance to believers.

(c) In accordance with our Lord's command the apostles went to Galilee to the mountain where he promised to show himself to them. And there he gave them the great commission to go to all parts of the world and bring men into his Church. This he could give because he himself, having completed his redemptive work and won the victory over sin and death, possesses all authority in heaven and earth. The mission intrusted to them was to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the threefold Name, and teaching them all that Jesus had taught. Cp. lesson 3. And the risen Lord promised to be with them continually, not leaving them to themselves, but constantly guiding and strengthening them.

(d) St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians gives us one

of the strongest statements we have of the reality of our Lord's resurrection. He is writing to a congregation of people whom he had himself made disciples and instructed, and he reminds them of the foremost truth he had taught them, which he had himself received from eye-witnesses, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. He then enumerates in a precise and deliberate way the appearances of the risen Lord to those who were appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection, that is, to assert and preach it publicly, omitting such appearances as that to Mary Magdalene. He solemnly declares, as he had declared when first he preached to the Corinthians, that Jesus Christ appeared to St. Peter, to the apostles as a body (Luke xxiv. 36 to 44, John xx. 19 to 24), to an assembly of more than five hundred, most of whom were still alive when he wrote; to St. James, to all the apostles, to himself on the road to Damascus when he was persecuting the Christians (Acts ix. 1 to 10). He gives this bare enumeration of the facts because he assumes that his readers would recollect the fuller message he had already given. So also in 1 Thess. i. 10 and iv. 14 he alludes briefly but clearly to the resurrection as a fact well known and undoubted. Thus we have from him accounts of the great event less full and interesting, to be sure, than those of the Gospels, but most important to remember as assuring us of the indubitable evidence upon which the faith of the first Christians rested. This is summarized, too, in our text.

Since our Lord rose and lives, we have a new life of freedom; "because I live, ye shall live also," he said.—John xiv. 19. Through him we are raised up "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." There is a resurrection of our souls, a passing from sin to holiness now; and the life hereafter is a continuation of this present new life. Cp. Rom. viii. 10, 11. And so the rising of Christ completes the saving

work of his death; he was put to death for our sins, "and was raised again for our justification."—Rom. iv. 25; cp. v. 10. Consequently St. Paul teaches (Rom. vi. 2 to 14) that in Baptism, wherein we confess our faith in Jesus risen and are made to share his risen life, we die to sins and are made alive to God. Therefore we must not fall back through sin into death, from which Christ has freed us; but by living righteously through the power of our risen Lord we must continue now and hereafter in his new life. "A conflict which ends in victory is the sum and substance of the Christian life," as it is of the story of Jesus' resurrection.

The risen Lord appeared to his disciples including St. Thomas, who joyfully confessed him as his Lord and God.

The Lord appeared to seven disciples while they were fishing, and giving them fish and bread showed the reality of his risen life and symbolized the new life he imparts to believers.

He appeared upon the mountain in Galilee, and commissioned his apostles for their work of bringing all men to share this new life.

St. Paul gives evidence of the firm belief of the first Christians that Christ had truly risen and had shown himself to well-known witnesses.

Because our Lord rose, we have a new life here, which is the beginning of life immortal.

The next lesson shows that an essential part of the apostles' work was to bear witness that Jesus Christ was risen. The teacher should read Acts iii. 13 to 16, iv. 10, 19 to 22, v. 29 to 33, xvii. 3, 18, xxv. 19, xxvi. 22, 23.

LESSON 29

THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES TO THE
RESURRECTION

Review. Our Lord appeared repeatedly in such ways as to prove he was truly living and in possession of a new and glorious life. In this the members of his kingdom share now and forever.

Text, Acts ii. 32. *Bible lesson*, Acts x. 34 to 44—Epistle for Monday in Easter-week.

Jesus Christ crucified and risen again from the dead was the foremost theme of the message which the apostles preached. Our Bible lesson describes what St. Peter once told a group of people to whom he was sent with the gospel news. On this occasion he was under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit in going to Cæsarea with his tidings, and Cornelius had sent for him from another city in consequence of receiving a heavenly vision. He found, too, a considerable company gathered together to hear what he had to tell them. Thus it was an occasion calling for the most essential message of Christianity. And St. Peter's address is prefaced in the narrative by the words, "he opened his mouth," a phrase used to introduce a solemn and weighty declaration (cp. viii. 35). Moreover, when his message was given, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard it. What then was this great message? That Jesus had been anointed with the Holy Ghost as the Messiah, and had manifested himself as the Christ by going about doing good and healing, as his disciples could bear witness; that he had been slain on the cross; and that God raised him up on the third day and made him manifest, not indeed to all the people,

but to witnesses chosen beforehand. He, yes he, is Lord of all, shown by his works of love and power and by his rising from the dead to be Lord and Christ. He shall be the Judge of all, and whoever believes in him shall receive forgiveness of sins. This is one example of the fact that the apostles preached "Jesus and the resurrection." Another is St. Paul's preaching at Antioch, described in Acts xiii. 26 to 42, Epistle for Tuesday in Easter-week.

We notice, too, that the apostles speak of themselves and are spoken of as witnesses to Jesus Christ and his resurrection. This is in accordance with our Lord's sayings in St. Luke xxiv. 48 and St. John xv. 27. And when it was necessary to choose an apostle in the place of Judas Iscariot, the apostles chose a man who had companied with them all through the Lord's public ministry, from his baptism to his ascension, that he might be a witness with them of his resurrection.—Acts i. 15 to end, Epistle for St. Matthias's Day. Thus one of their chief duties was to bear witness to what they had seen and heard of his life, works, and teaching, his death, and, above all, his rising again. If we make clear to ourselves how fundamental the preaching of the resurrection was, we shall see how firmly the whole New Testament Church believed that the Lord had truly risen.

This universal and early belief, dating from the very morning of the resurrection, is weighty evidence to the truth of that great event. The apostles, because of this belief, declared fearlessly before all people, before the rulers, in spite of mocking, threats, imprisonment, beatings, and later even of torture and death, that they were witnesses to the fact of Jesus' resurrection. It is impossible that such a belief should have sprung up, when the disciples were plunged into despair by the crucifixion, unless they had indubitable proof, such as they declared they had, that Jesus was risen. As a practical thought we may add that in many ages in-

numerable martyrs, or witnesses for Christ, have testified like the apostles to their firm belief in him as the risen Lord, in whose service and by whose power they would live and die. Do we, too, bear witness to the truth and power of our Lord's resurrection by word and deed, and show forth the power of the new life within us?

The central truth proclaimed by the apostles was the resurrection and its message of the new life.

The apostles regarded themselves as witnesses of the resurrection.

The belief of the whole New Testament Church, dating from the very day of the resurrection, that Jesus was risen, could have sprung up only if his rising truly occurred.

The next lesson tells of our Lord's departure from earth to reign in heaven as our King. On the significance of his ascension see Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship*, pages 81 ff. and 97 ff.

LESSON 30

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

Review. Our Lord rose the third day, conquering death and winning eternal life for us. He appeared repeatedly to his disciples, who bore witness to all men of his resurrection.

Text, St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51. *Bible lesson*, Acts i. 1 to 12—Epistle for Ascension-day.

Even before his death, our Lord told his disciples that he would go to his Father's house to prepare a place for them; and he said also: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."—John xiv. 2, xvi. 28; cp. vi. 62, xx. 17. After

his resurrection he manifested himself during forty days when and how he chose, proving himself to be truly risen, and teaching his apostles about the kingdom which he had come to establish. And he commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for his Father's promise, given through him, that the Holy Ghost should come upon them. So St. Luke in the opening verses of the Acts recapitulates what he had told in the last part of his former narrative, his Gospel.

The story of the ascension itself he begins with the question which the eleven apostles, assembled on the Mount of Olives above Bethany, asked of the Lord, "Is it now that thou dost reestablish the kingdom of Israel?" They still misunderstood the nature of his redemptive work for men, and imagined "the kingdom of God" might mean an earthly empire. Our Lord did not reply directly, but led their thoughts away from temporal sovereignty to the duty of being witnesses for him, and to the power which they should receive for this work in the coming of the Holy Spirit. And he told them they were to bear witness of him "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," indicating that his kingdom should be not for the Jews alone but universal. Then, when he had thus spoken, he passed in royal state to his Father's throne, the cloud receiving him as though it were a chariot. Thus the apostles' question about the kingdom was answered, so far as the present is concerned, by our Lord's entering in this visible and profoundly significant way into his heavenly glory. And for the future it was answered by the angels' words: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Our Lord has indeed established a kingdom, world-wide, of boundless power, destined to endure forever; and it is, as he had said repeatedly and now showed by his ascension, a kingdom not of this world, but spiritual and more real than that of any earthly ruler.

The ascension was the enthronement of our heavenly King. This is evident from the manner of his final departure from his apostles. For whereas the risen Lord simply vanished from their sight after each of his earlier appearances, he parted from them for the last time in such a way that they knew it was the last. And he chose a manner of departure which clearly showed that he was received by his Father into divine glory. For the sky above is always the symbol of God's abode, and a cloud, as at the transfiguration, may symbolize his presence. And so our Lord's ascending from the earth toward the blue depths of the sky and departing upon the cloud was the most perfect symbol we can imagine of his entrance upon his heavenly reign. Furthermore, this solemn and glorious close to his earthly life is spoken of by the apostles as a triumph: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour."—Acts v. 31. The glory upon which he entered is not open to our eyes, and his ruling power is not always evident to us; but we know from the mighty act by which he took possession of his royal state that he who became incarnate, died and rose again for us, continues to live, and that his work continues.

He who ascended was the same Jesus Christ who was born, worked and taught among men. And he ascended with the same body in which he had lived, had been put to death and rose again. In this body, glorified by his victory over death, he entered upon the life of heaven. Cp. Ephes. iv. 8 to 11. He did not merely resume the glory that he had with the Father from the beginning of the world; but he returned to his Father as perfect Man, highly exalted because he had been obedient even unto the death of the cross. And the ascension differs, too, from the departure from this world which he might have chosen when he was transfigured; for when he ascended his work was finished, his sacrifice was made, his victory over death was won.

“Jesus we know, and he is on the throne,” is the message to us of the ascension. Our Saviour-King rules over all things in heaven and earth as sovereign, possessing all power.—Matt. xxviii. 18, 1 Peter iii. 22. And so we have a Friend in heaven, the very same Lord Jesus who lived upon our earth, who loves us and understands us; he is upon the right hand of the Majesty on high, unseen by mortal eyes, but guiding and controlling all that comes to pass. There he “makes intercession for us.”—Rom. viii. 34. And as he parted from his apostles with his hands upraised in blessing, so now he is our High Priest, who pleads and presents his perfect sacrifice, made once for all upon Calvary, through whom we come with confident trust to the very throne of the Most High.—Heb. iv. 14, 16, sentence for Ascension-day in Morning Prayer. Cp. Heb. x. 12 to 15. And so the truth that Jesus our Saviour is our ascended King should fill us with courage and steadfastness alike in prayer and work, and with calm certainty that our lives and all human affairs will be guided for the best.

Our Lord foretold his ascension, and during the forty days after Easter he prepared his apostles’ minds for his departure from them.

Having led their thoughts away from temporal sovereignty, he ascended in their sight to take possession of his heavenly kingdom.

His ascension was the enthronement of our King, the triumph following his victory over sin and death.

He who ascended was the same Jesus who was born, lived, died and rose again for us.

He lives now in heaven, receiving our prayers, making intercession for us, ruling all events, guiding our lives.

The next lesson tells of two revelations given by our Lord

of his heavenly life and power. The teacher should compare Acts xxii. 6 to 17, xxvi. 12 to 19, 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8, 9 and Gal. i. 12 with our second Bible lesson.

LESSON 31

SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER

Review. After appearing to his disciples during forty days, our Lord parted from them for the last time, and ascended to heaven upon a cloud to take possession of his kingdom.

Text, Col. iii. 1. *Bible lessons*: Acts vii. 55 to end—Epistle for St. Stephen's Day; Acts ix. 1 to 10—first part of Epistle for St. Paul's Day.

The apostles very early applied to the ascension the words of Psalm 110: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand."—Acts ii. 33 to 37. They did so, no doubt, because of our Lord's words, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power."—Mark xiv. 62. To sit on the right hand of a great man is to have a distinguished place, and so the phrase is naturally used to signify the possession of honor and power. Hence it is used in the Creed not as though we supposed God has a body or hands, but as expressing, so far as human language can, the truth that Jesus fully shares the divine glory of the Father and administers the supreme government of heaven and earth. This truth was made known by the manner of our Lord's final departure from his disciples, as we have seen; and it is impressed upon us further when we consider the glimpses of his exalted state which he granted to St. Stephen and St. Paul.

The first Christian martyr saw his ascended Lord in the

heavens. The story of his martyrdom and of this revelation should be told fully in class, but here only two comments need be made. First, the contrast should be noticed between this manifestation of the risen Jesus and those given before his ascension, when he appeared in the midst of his disciples and spoke with them face to face. Secondly, Jesus was seen "standing," which reminds us not to think of the phrase "sitteth at the right hand" in a material way or too literally.

That which happened to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road was in its effects one of the most important events that ever occurred, changing a violent persecutor of "the Way" (the Christian Church) into the apostle who preached the Gospel to many nations, and who has had a greater influence upon Christian thought than any other man. As he journeyed, a light from heaven brighter than the sun at mid-day suddenly shone round him and those who were with him. They fell to the ground. And Saul heard the voice of Jesus speaking to him, and he "saw the Lord." The others heard the sound of a voice and saw the great light; but Saul saw Jesus, and definitely heard his words, "Why persecutest thou me," that is, in persecuting the disciples. The men with Saul stood speechless after hearing the sound and seeing the light. When he arose from the ground he was blinded until healed by Ananias at the Lord's command. This turning-point in St. Paul's life was again a glimpse of Jesus Christ in his risen and ascended heavenly glory.

It is evident from these brief visions of our Lord, that in his heavenly glory he watches over his Church and over every man, and is active in behalf of all. Our conviction is hereby confirmed that, since the King over all is our Saviour, he hears our prayers and controls all things for the best. We should never think, then, that our Lord's departure from earth has removed him to a distance from us. He is at hand

for our every need, he hears every prayer, he sends his Holy Spirit into every faithful heart. He is nearer to us while at God's right hand than he would be if he were somewhere upon our earth. We worship and serve not a dead Saviour who lived once upon the earth long ago, but a living Lord who now reigns in heaven.

Since he is in heaven, our citizenship is there (Phil. iii. 20), and we must have our hearts and our hopes where our Master is. If we are risen with him, so that we are dead to sin and possess his new life, then we should also in heart and mind ascend to heaven and dwell continually with him. —Collect for Ascension-day. Our minds should be set on "the things that are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God."

Our Lord "sits upon the right hand of God," that is, administers now the supreme government of all things in heaven and in earth.

St. Stephen saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

St. Paul was converted by a manifestation to him of the ascended Christ.

Our Lord, who lives in heaven, is closer to each one of us than if he were somewhere upon earth.

Our hearts and minds ought to be with him.

The next lesson tells us that our Lord, who is now in heaven, will come again to judgment. The pupils may need some guidance as to the parts of the Bible lessons from which the questions of the *Outline* are to be answered.

LESSON 32

HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND
THE DEAD

Review. The revelation of our ascended Lord to St. Stephen and to St. Paul assures us that he now lives and reigns in active power at the right hand of his Father.

Text, St. Mark xiii. 35, 36. *Bible lesson,* St. Matt. xxiv. 23 to 32—Gospel for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

At our Lord's ascension the two angels declared that he will return in the same glorious manner in which he was taken up into heaven. And while he was still with his disciples he told them repeatedly that he would come one day in power to judge all men. Cp. Matt. xvi. 27. Some of his sayings about his coming again are contained in our Bible lesson. In the earlier part of the chapter there are recorded his predictions that the Temple should be destroyed and Jerusalem overthrown. From this he passed on to a warning not to believe in false Christs and false prophets, or to listen to reports that Christ has returned in some secret way. For his coming shall be as open and overwhelming as a lightning flash shining across the whole sky. Thus his advent shall be widely different from his first coming to earth as a poor infant in the little village. There shall be startling signs of his coming and great woes in all the earth. And then all people "shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

The purpose of his coming thus in power will be to judge all men.—2 Cor. v. 10. This judgment will include both those who have died before that day and "the quick," those who are then alive. The dead in Christ shall rise, and the

faithful who are still living shall be taken up with them.—1 Thess. iv. 15 to 18; cp. last verse of our Bible lesson. The wicked and unbelieving, also, as well as the righteous, shall be brought before him, seated on his glorious throne.—Matt. xxv. 31 to 34. He will judge every man with complete insight into his real character and with the most perfect justice, rewarding or punishing each according to the principle, “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”—Matt. xxv. 34 to end.

There will come a day, then, according to the plain teaching of our Lord and his apostles, when everyone of us shall stand face to face with Jesus Christ. “The same Jesus” who was once upon the earth and now lives in heaven shall be seen by every man. Cp. Rev. i. 7. God “hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained, having afforded proof of this by raising him from the dead.”—Acts xvii. 31; cp. x. 42. As surely as he rose and now lives, he will appear once more. He who came once as our Saviour, who perfectly understands and sympathizes with us, will come again as our Judge. And just because he knows our hearts and has such perfect love toward us it will be a searching trial to stand before him unless we have his love in our hearts and have lived in the power of his risen life. His coming will be terrible to all who have rejected the appeal of his love and have failed to show forth love toward others; the world will mourn bitterly when he comes again. But those “who love his appearing” will look up and lift up their heads, for their redemption will be drawing nigh.—Luke xxi. 28. It is a good test of our lives to ask ourselves whether we look forward to his coming with fear or with joy.

The state of blessedness into which the Lord receives the faithful shall be everlasting. He who became man for our

sake shall reign in glory forever in a kingdom that "shall have no end," and with him all the redeemed. The dark side of this great truth is the eternal loss to be suffered by those who, having obstinately rejected him, "shall go away into everlasting fire," even as "the righteous into life eternal."

Our Lord emphasizes two duties in view of his advent, watchfulness and faithfulness. No one knows the time of his coming; he is like a man leaving his house for a long journey and giving his servants their work to do while he is gone. But though he seems to delay his return he will surely come again, and will reward or punish his servants according to their work.—Mark xiii. 32 to end. "Watch therefore."

Our Lord has said he will come again, not in weakness but in power and in open majesty.

He will come to judge all, the dead and the living, with perfect justice.

Each of us, then, must one day stand face to face with our Saviour and King.

His kingdom, in which the redeemed shall share, shall have no end.

The next lesson is based on the prologue to St. John's Gospel, which, although it is too full of meaning to be wholly explained, is too important to be passed over. We can at least draw great and living truths from it for the children, and start them in the way of understanding and appreciating it later. The teacher will find valuable aid in Purves, article "Logos," in Hastings *Dictionary of the Bible*, and in Westcott, *The Gospel of St. John*, pages 1 to 12.

LESSON 33

THE WORD OF GOD INCARNATE

Review. The same Lord Jesus who once lived among men and now reigns in heaven will one day come in glory, and each of us must then stand before his face for judgment.

Text, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *Bible lesson,* St. John i. 1 to 15—first Gospel for Christmas-day.

The prologue to St. John's Gospel is taken for our last lesson about God the Son, because in it the beloved apostle sums up his teaching as to who his Master was, and what the purpose was of his coming to earth. After years of meditation upon all he had seen the Master do and heard him say, upon the life, death, resurrection and ascension, in short the whole historic personality and teaching of Jesus Christ, St. John wrote this profound summary of his conviction that Jesus is the real Incarnation of an eternally divine Person, the only-begotten Son of God, who reveals God to men and is our Saviour.

He calls Jesus Christ "the Word." Now a word is the expression of thought, and the word of a true man makes his real nature known; speech is our most nearly perfect means of conveying our ideas to others. When, therefore, St. John calls his Master the Word, he beautifully expresses the truth that Christ is the perfect manifestation of God's nature and will. Before Christ came to earth there were types and shadows of the revelation to come, and these were given through his divine activity; when he came, he showed all men by his life what God's nature is, and what he would have us do. "The Word" is used, however, not to assert that Christ was a teacher of truths about God; but rather it is a designation of the Son in his everlasting function of

revealer of God. For he manifests God because he is in essence God, and stands eternally in relation to God, as a word stands in relation to thought, or, better, to the mind that thinks it. Jesus Christ is called the Word, then, because he is the personal manifestation of Deity. Again, we use the term, the Word of God, to denote God's revelation recorded in the Bible. The very center of this revelation is the significance of Christ's person and mission, and it is given in order that men may participate in the life of God, which is offered to believers through Christ. Consequently he in whose being and mission all revelation centers, whose divine activity and personal coming perfectly manifests God's mind and will, is called emphatically the Word of God.

"In the beginning," before anything was created, "the Word was," existing from all eternity. "And the Word was with God," eternally in relation to God, existing as a Person distinct from God but in active communion with him; he did not first become personal when he entered our world at the Incarnation. "And the Word was God"; in his essential nature he was Deity. These statements are weighty and full of meaning, though so brief; their formal, stately rhythm impresses upon us how emphatic they are. "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made"; the Word was the agent of God in all his creative activity, apart from whom nothing was made. "That which was made was life in him"; all life, physical, mental, moral, in the world is due to him, the quickening Presence in all things, through whom all things are sustained. Cp. Col. i. 15 to 18. "And the life was the light of men"; the life of the Word, manifest in the created world, revealed God and duty. We have seen that God is revealed in nature and in his dealings with men. Cp. pages 21, 22, 48, 49, 56. This revelation, St. John says, was due to the Word, who was the agent of God in this as he was in creation. Hence the

Word was the Light even before he gave mankind the full illumination of his incarnate presence. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness overcame it not"; man became immersed in darkness by sin and could not receive the light, which yet is not conquered.

Such was the state of mankind before Jesus Christ came to be the true Light of every man. When he came, St. John the Baptist bore witness to him, that all men might believe. Yet as the Light was rejected before, although he was in the world and it had been made through him, so when he came as man even his own chosen people would not receive him. There continued the same conflict between goodness and sin, belief and disbelief, after his Incarnation as before. But to those who believe with a personal faith he gives the right to become the children of God through fellowship with the only-begotten Son. This new life is from God, not from natural descent or from human desire or power.

The crowning manifestation of God is given through the coming of the eternal Word into human life as Man. "The Word was made flesh"; the Person who appeared was the divine Word who is eternally with God and is ever God, and he took upon himself the complete nature of man, body as well as soul. "Was made flesh" does not mean that a divine Being was changed into a man. The Word did not cease to be God, as the whole drift of the passage shows, but, continuing to exist as God, took to himself body and spirit, and so became Man. "Was made" reminds us, however, that the Word did not assume humanity as something that would be laid aside; he retains now in heaven the human nature which he assumed. The humanity of the Word is complete, not lacking any part of human nature, such as will. It is real and permanent, not a temporary appearance, like a costume or mask. The divine Nature of the Word remains divine, the human remains human, as our minds

and bodies are distinct though closely joined. The Word is one Person, yet what he does as God he does in his divine Nature, and what he does as man he does in his human Nature.

The Word made flesh dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, and showed forth his glory, like the Shekinah in the tabernacle, such glory as became the only-begotten of the Father. This his disciples beheld, and knew from what their eyes saw that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, on whom they should believe, and through whom they were made children of God. We too should know him as the Word, revealing God, the Life in whom we live, the Light from whom come knowledge, purity and joy. And as firmly as we believe in "one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him," we should believe in "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

The prologue to St. John's Gospel sums up the teaching of the Gospel as to the person and mission of Jesus Christ, based on his historical manifestation of himself.

Jesus Christ is the Word because he perfectly manifests God, being the eternal Son.

He is from everlasting, a Person, divine, by whom all things have been made and are sustained, the Light who reveals God.

His revelation is given that all men may believe, though many reject him, and that all who believe may have new life in God.

This eternal, divine Person became Man, not ceasing to be God, but taking permanently to himself human nature in its completeness.

He so dwelt among men that his disciples saw his glory and knew him to be the Son of God.

REVIEW

A review of lessons 23 to 33 inclusive should be held before proceeding further. The main theme is the redemptive work of our Lord, "God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind." He suffered and died to show us the wickedness of our sins, to draw us to God through his love, and to take away our sins by his one sacrifice of himself. He rose again, conquering death, that we may rise from the death of sin and enter upon his new life of immortality. He so appeared to his disciples that they surely knew him to be truly risen, and were thereby fully assured that he is the Son of God. He commissioned his apostles to be witnesses of his resurrection and to bring all men to share in his life. He ascended to heaven and rules now over all, guiding our lives, making intercession for us, and abiding more closely with us than if he were present as he once was with men. Moreover he will come to judge us all and to receive the faithful into the full blessedness of his unending kingdom. All this he has done and now does for us through his being the incarnate Word, God and Man, one Person, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Lesson 34 takes up the third paragraph of the Creeds, concerning the third Person of the Holy Trinity and his work in sanctifying the people of God. In preparation for this and the following lessons the teacher would do well to read Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship*, Chapter vii., and Swete, article on the "Holy Spirit" in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. Valuable notes will be found in Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pages 199 f. and in Westcott, *The Gospel of St. John*, on xiv. 15 ff.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God.

LESSON 34

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST

Review. The eternal Son of God, having become incarnate for our salvation, having revealed God and taught us his will, having died for our sins and risen that we might have life, ascended into heaven. He reigns now at the right hand of God, and yet he is closer to each of us than if he were still upon our earth.

Text, St. John xvi. 7. *Bible lesson,* St. John xiv. 15 to end—Gospel for Whitsunday.

Something concerning the Holy Spirit was revealed in the Old Testament, although he was not fully made known until after our Lord was glorified. In Genesis i. and ii. we are told that at the creation the Spirit of God co-operated with the Word of God in bringing about the order and harmony of the natural world, and originated the personal life of man. The prophets and psalmists recognized that they received an inspiration from the Spirit, and that he guides men in living aright. And when the Christ was to be born, the power of the Holy Spirit was shown in prophecy preparing his way. For the birth of the Baptist was foretold, who

should "be filled with the Holy Ghost"; and the Holy Spirit caused his parents to prophesy of him.—Luke i. 15, 41 to 46, 67 to 80. Again, when Jesus was brought to the Temple Simeon and Anna prophesied concerning him.—Luke ii. 25 to 39. The Holy Spirit caused the Virgin Mary to conceive the Saviour.—Matt. i. 18, 20, Luke i. 35. He inspired the Baptist to proclaim the coming of the Christ. And at the Baptism of Jesus, the Spirit came upon him, and anointed him as the Christ.—Matt. iii. 16. And all through his ministry the Spirit abode with him in his teaching and healing, strengthening his humanity with heavenly power.—Mark i. 12, Luke iv. 14, 18, Matt. xii. 28, Acts i. 2. Thus the Holy Ghost was partly revealed even before our Lord taught his disciples about him.

While our Lord was still engaged in his work, he promised to his disciples the guidance and strength of the Spirit.—Matt. x. 20, Luke xi. 13. And when the end of his earthly life was drawing near, he prepared his apostles' minds for his departure from them by his promise that "another Comforter" should take his place, as we read in our Bible lesson. He said he would pray the Father to give them the Spirit of truth, who would be with them always. He himself must depart, but to those who love him and keep his commandments, he would send the Holy Spirit. The world would not be able to receive him, because it would not receive Christ, and so could not know the Spirit whom he sends. But those who believe in Christ and serve him know the Spirit, because he is present with them, bringing them fuller knowledge and fuller power to receive him. Thus our Lord's departure would not leave his disciples orphans, for he comes to them, makes them share his new life, and abides with them. Through the Holy Spirit he is as truly present with them now as when he companied with his apostles during his earthly life. This manifestation of the Father and the Son

through the Holy Spirit is granted to those who love the Lord and keep his commandments.

When the Comforter should come, our Lord further promised, he would teach the disciples, interpreting to them the true character of Christ, and recalling his teaching to them. This was highly needful, for while the revelation given in Christ is perfect and complete, without the gradual illumination of the Holy Spirit it is partly unintelligible and partly unobserved. Much that our Lord said and did was not understood by the apostles at the time, and much was not clearly remembered for a while. But when the Holy Spirit came their minds were enlightened to remember and understand. The word "Comforter" is a translation of "Paraclete," which may also be rendered Advocate or Helper. It means one who is called to the side of another to counsel, support or aid him. "To comfort" formerly had the same meaning as "to strengthen." And so the name "Comforter" does not so much imply that the Holy Spirit consoles us, as that he comes to strengthen us, and exert a supreme moral power in the life of the Church and of the individual. These points, at least, in our Bible lesson may be brought out.

The main thought to be emphasized is that the Holy Ghost takes our Lord's place with his disciples, now that our Lord has ascended to heaven; he is Christ's substitute and representative on earth, his Vicar. This is plain from our Lord's saying, in our text, "I will send him unto you," and from verses 16 and 26 of our Bible lesson, where he says the Father will send at his request "another" Comforter, and will send him "in my name." Cp. John xvi. 13, 14. But the Holy Ghost takes the place of Christ only in order that through his working Christ and the Father may dwell in our hearts. Our Lord said he would come to his disciples and be in them; the Comforter would come, and abide with them forever; the Father as well as the Son would come

to abide with them. These sayings, at first sight contradictory, teach us the harmonious, undivided action of the one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the heart of the believer. "In the coming of the Spirit the Son too was to come; in the coming of the Son, also the Father." Thus the truth that the Holy Ghost takes the place of our ascended Lord makes more real to us the truth that our Saviour is even now with us; for we learn from his promise of the Comforter this at least, that he sends a mighty spiritual Power into men's hearts, who causes him and the Father to abide there.

The Holy Spirit was partly made known through the Old Testament revelation and through his presence with Jesus Christ during his life on earth.

A definite promise that the Holy Spirit would come in full measure upon the faithful was given by our Lord just before his crucifixion.

The Holy Spirit, our Lord said, would teach his disciples to remember and understand what he had made known, and would give them strength.

The Holy Spirit is the Vicar of Christ, taking the place of the ascended Lord with the faithful on earth, and causing Christ and the Father to dwell with them.

The next lesson tells us of the fulfilment of our Lord's promise in the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

LESSON 35

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

Review. Our Lord promised his apostles just before his death that he would send the Comforter to take his place.

Text, Acts v. 32. *Bible lesson*, Acts ii. 1 to 12—Epistle for Whitsunday.

After the resurrection our Lord communicated his Spirit to the apostles; "he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."—John xx. 22. But he also bade them wait for the full outpouring of the Spirit after he was ascended.—Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 4, 5, 8. For the gift of the Holy Spirit in full measure depends upon our Lord's ascension and presence in heaven.—John vii. 39, xvi. 7, Acts ii. 33. Ten days after our Lord's ascension, his promise that the Comforter should come was fulfilled. The disciples were all gathered together on the day of Pentecost, one of the three great festivals of the Jews. Cp. Levit. xxiii. 15 to 22. Suddenly the sound as of a great gale came to their ears, and they saw tongues as of flame darting hither and thither and then resting upon the heads of them all. These signs would no doubt remind them that our Lord had compared the Spirit's coming to the wind's blowing where it will, and would recall the Baptist's prophecy that Christ would baptize his disciples "with the Holy Ghost and with fire."—John iii. 7, 8, Matt. iii. 11. The sound filling the whole house signified that the power of the Holy Spirit would fill the whole Church; and the "tongues distributing themselves," as "cloven tongues" should be translated, one resting on the head of each disciple, signified that the Holy Spirit divides his gifts to every man individually as he will. It was evident that a new departure in God's dealings with

mankind had begun, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, who had come to dwell with the faithful. This the disciples felt, and they began to pour forth praises to God. When the sound of the mighty wind was heard, a crowd gathered, made up of men from widely different parts of the world who were at Jerusalem for the festival; and, whatever their language, they heard the disciples speak of the mighty works of God. In this gift of tongues we may see a sign that all races of men are to be brought into Christ's Church through the power of his Holy Spirit.

The sound passed, the fiery tongues disappeared, the gift of speaking so as to be understood by men of foreign speech ceased; but the presence of the Holy Spirit with the disciples remained, and was manifested in ways no less real though less striking. Contrast the power, wisdom and courage shown by them, and notably by the apostles, with their hesitation, doubts, failure to understand their Master's words, before the Holy Ghost came upon them. They became brave and faithful witnesses for Christ. See their courageous words in our text, spoken before the council which had brought about their Master's death. The Holy Spirit strengthened and enlightened them so that they were fully equipped for their great work of making the Gospel known throughout the world.

Christ's promise, as we saw, was that another Comforter should take his place. Only a divine being could take the place of our Lord. And his whole way of speaking of the Holy Spirit, and his linking together the threefold Name in his command about Baptism, imply that the Spirit, equally with the Father and the Son, is divine. When the Spirit was given at Pentecost, the disciples could not fail to see that he is the Spirit of God, just as the prophets in old times knew that they were moved by "the Spirit of the LORD." Accordingly we too believe him to be divine, as the Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ are divine, and confess our faith in him as "the Lord." And the phrase, "who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified," expresses more fully our belief that the Holy Spirit is truly God. For God alone may be worshiped; the best of men, the highest of archangels, the mightiest natural or spiritual powers, never. Belief in the Holy Spirit as truly God should have the practical result that we pray to him, as in the Litany, and rely upon his help.

In accordance with our Lord's promise the Holy Spirit was poured upon the disciples at Pentecost.

The coming of the Holy Spirit strengthened and illuminated the disciples for their work of making the Gospel known throughout the world.

The Holy Spirit, who takes Christ's place and strengthens his disciples, is the Spirit of Christ and of God, the divine Lord, whom with the Father and the Son we worship.

The next lesson tells us of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with the Church and the evident manifestations of his power during the early days described in the New Testament. For further instances of his presence and power see Acts ix. 17, xiii. 9 to 13, Rom. xv. 19, Acts xi. 28, xx. 23, xxi. 4, 9 to 11, Mark xiii. 11.

LESSON 36

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Review. The Holy Spirit was poured forth upon the disciples at Pentecost, and made known by outward signs and by inward power as the Spirit of God, the divine Lord to whom we may pray for strength and guidance.

Text, Acts iv. 31. *Bible lessons*: Acts viii. 14 to 18—Epistle for Tuesday in Whitsun-week; 1 Cor. xii. 8 to 12—last part of Epistle for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marked a new departure in God's dealings with mankind, as did the coming of Jesus Christ on the first Christmas-day. Just as truly as God was with his chosen people in Old Testament times, and just as truly as our Lord was with his disciples during his earthly life, the Holy Spirit has been with the Church and the faithful since the day of Pentecost. He is not seen and heard as the Saviour was while he was among men, but his presence is made known no less truly. And during the early days of the Church, described in the Acts and alluded to in the Epistles, his presence was shown by plain signs well known to all Christians. The Acts is the story of his sanctifying work, as the Gospels are the story of Christ's redemptive work; only, as the work of the Holy Spirit goes on now and will continue until Christ comes again, the story of it is only begun in the Acts.

We saw in lesson 29 that when the good news of Christ's resurrection was preached to Cornelius and his friends the Holy Ghost fell upon them all. His coming upon them was made manifest because they spoke with tongues and mag-

nified God.—Acts x. 44 to end, last part of Epistle for Monday in Whitsun-week. In our first Bible lesson, again, we read of the giving of the Holy Ghost to people in Samaria. The gospel message had been brought to them, they had been baptized, and then two of the apostles came down from Jerusalem and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Cp. Acts xix. 1 to 7.

The coming of the Holy Ghost upon believers was often accompanied in the New Testament days by the bestowal of spiritual gifts and powers, such as St. Paul enumerates in our second Bible lesson. Among Christian believers there were some who had through the Spirit the power to set forth Christian truth, and that, too, with wisdom or insight into its deepest meanings. Others possessed a high degree of faith, the effects of which were the healing of the sick, the working of miracles, the power of prophetic speech, flowing from inspiration, and the ability to discern whether the Spirit of Christ were really present in anyone who claimed to be under his guidance. Again, some had the gift of ecstatic prayer and praise, or of interpreting to the congregation the utterances of others who were deeply moved by the Holy Spirit. (This gift of speaking with tongues seems to be distinct from that described as given at Pentecost.) But all these gifts, well known and actually observable, came from the one Holy Spirit; they were not mere wonders, but were signs manifesting his presence and his nature. That he was present with the apostles in a special way, we may add, was impressively proved by the fate of Ananias and Sapphira.—Acts v. 1 to 12. For when they tried to practise a deception upon the apostles they perished miserably, as persons who had attempted to deceive the Holy Spirit, and therefore had lied to God.

The Holy Ghost was further manifested by deep spiritual results in the whole life of the apostles and brethren. Our

text shows that they told with high courage the good news of Christ risen, as appears more clearly when the whole story of Acts iv. is read; and this is only one instance among the many recorded of their faithfulness in proclaiming their message. Moreover there was a new sense of brotherhood among the whole body of Christians, which showed itself in very practical forms of mutual helpfulness and self-sacrificing devotion to the common cause.—Acts iv. 32 to 36. And they possessed a wonderful joy and inward peace even in the midst of persecutions.—Acts xiii. 52, 1 Pet. i. 6 to 10, Phil. iv. 7, Gal. v. 22. It is also to be noticed that the apostles were definitely conscious of being guided by the Holy Spirit in their work of spreading Christ's Gospel.—Acts viii. 29, x. 19, 20, xiii. 2, 4, xv. 28, xvi. 6, 7.

Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost was a fact in the daily life of the New Testament Church, known experimentally and practically. As God the Father was made known by his just and loving control of his people's destiny, and the Son by his redemptive work, so the Holy Spirit was made known by his abiding presence and power shown in great outward results, and inwardly witnessed to by the new life and joy of the believer. Accordingly Christians have seen from the earliest days that the Holy Spirit is a Person, even as the Father and the Son are Persons. Cp. pages 25, 26. Consequently we express in the Creeds our belief in him just as distinctly as in the Father and the Son. We also confess our belief that there is an eternal essential relation of the three Persons in the unity of the Holy Trinity. As we say of God the Son that he is "begotten of the Father," so we express the eternal relation of God the Holy Spirit to the Holy Trinity by saying of him that he "proceedeth from the Father and the Son." This makes the truth of his personality more explicit, as well as his divinity. It is of deep importance that we should know the Holy Spirit to be a

divine Person and not a mere influence or vague power. He is our personal Friend, who comes to abide in our hearts, who is grieved by wrongdoing (Ephes. iv. 30), who will not remain if we drive him from us by wilful, persistent sin, to whom we can pray, in whose strength we can live aright.

We live under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which began with his coming on the day of Pentecost.

When the Holy Spirit was given in New Testament days by the laying on of the apostles' hands, his presence was shown by evident effects in those who received him.

The Holy Spirit gave many gifts and powers to the faithful by which his presence and nature were made known.

He guided and strengthened the apostles and other disciples in their work, and gave them inward joy and peace.

His presence as a fact of daily life made them sure that he is a divine Person, a Friend who dwells in the faithful to guide and sustain them.

The next lesson reminds us that the work of the Holy Ghost continues now among all who will yield themselves to him. The teacher should carefully consider Rom. viii. 12 to 18, Epistle for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity; Ephes. iii. 13 to end, Epistle for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity; Titus iii. 3 to 8. Such hymns as 76 and 375 may be used with advantage.

LESSON 37

THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST IN OUR HEARTS

Review. The presence of the Holy Spirit was a fact of daily life to the Christians of New Testament days, and the manner in which it was shown clearly revealed him as a Person.

Text, Rom. v. 5. *Bible lesson*, Gal. v. 16 to 25—Epistle for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Everyone "believes in a good heart," as a popular phrase has it; but the important question for everyone is, how it is possible to have a good heart. For it is not always easy to know what our duty is, so that we perceive just what we ought to do under given circumstances; well-meaning people often make lamentable mistakes. And even when we know what is right, to do right is not easy. It is one thing to delight in the law of God, another to have that law working in our hearts and not the law of sin. Cp. Rom. vii. 18, 19. Even before Christ came into the world, men knew what God's law is, for it had been given through Moses and preached by the prophets; and when Christ came he taught us fully what we ought to do and gave us a perfect example. But where are we to find strength to follow him? Everyone finds by experience a powerful inclination to do wrong. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," our natural desires would make us yield to temptations; "so that we cannot do the things that we would," the things to which our conscience prompts. We do not wish to be led away into the works of the flesh that St. Paul enumerates in our Bible lesson, sins against self, God and man, and to become unfit for the kingdom of heaven; but temptations are strong, and through our lower natures they find a ready entrance into our very hearts.

But it is a matter of Christian experience that the Holy Spirit helps us to see our duty and to overcome evil. Our Lord, who understands our temptations, did not come merely to tell us our duty and to set us an example, and then go away and leave us to struggle against sin without help. Every faithful Christian knows that he can learn to see his duty more clearly, can make headway against evil, and grow toward the pattern of Christ, through the power of the Holy

Spirit whom Christ sends. Therefore St. Paul appeals to abiding facts of Christian experience when he speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. His enumeration of the results which flow from the power of the Holy Spirit falls into three parts. First, there are characteristics of the Christian in his intercourse with God, the love, joy and peace which are the immediate outcome of faith in God. Secondly, there are characteristics of the Christian's bearing toward his fellow-men, namely: longsuffering, or patient endurance under injuries; gentleness, or a kindly disposition; goodness, or active beneficence, which uses every opportunity for helping others; and faithfulness, or trustworthiness. Thirdly, there are characteristics of the Christian life with reference to self, meekness, or a due estimate of the place which self should occupy, and self-control, or the rigorous determination that self shall be kept in its place. Such qualities are fruits of the Spirit, seen in the lives of faithful Christians, which grow not from self but from the indwelling power of God.

It follows that the Christian who desires goodness in heart and life, who knows the deadly feud in himself between good and evil, and who observes the lives of those who are led by the Spirit, believes in the Holy Ghost as "the Giver of life." Through his life-giving presence it is possible to have a good heart. From him comes power to change from an evil to a good life, to overcome temptations, to do our duty, to bear our crosses, to grow in grace toward the perfect example of Christ. The working of the Holy Spirit is as quiet as that of the sunlight on grain and trees, but it is mighty, and causes men to grow toward righteousness. As at the creation, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, light and life were brought forth, so now all spiritual knowledge and life come from him. He brings spiritual order and harmony out of the chaotic world of sin. His influence is not forced upon men, and it spreads only as men will

receive him; consequently it vanquishes evil very gradually. But a new life does show itself as Christianity spreads and leavens the nations to which it comes. The manifestations of this new life are less striking now than in early days, but the life is none the less real because it is unseen except in quiet, beneficent workings. And it is to be seen all around and within us, so that each teacher ought to be able to illustrate this truth by definite instances, drawn from reading about Christian lives and from personal observation and inner experience of the Holy Spirit's help. His work in our hearts is a daily, present reality. The practical lesson which St. Paul urges is that the one great aim of Christians must be to advance in the life of the Spirit. They who are Christ's have crucified the passions and lusts of their lower nature. They are dead to the flesh and live to the Spirit. Therefore they should make their conduct conform to the new life which they possess. The fruit of the Spirit is to be seen growing, but it is far from perfection. The life described is a state which the Christian has been put in the way of attaining rather than one to which he has attained. But since we have this new life, we must strive to allow it full development.

We wish to do right, and find our own wisdom and strength insufficient to perceive, still less to do, what we ought. But the Holy Spirit aids us, so that the lives of faithful Christians grow toward the pattern of Christ. Because of his life-giving power, described in the Scriptures and seen now in its workings, we believe in him as the Giver of Life.

The next lesson is about one of the greatest works of the Holy Spirit, the Bible inspired by him. It has been found necessary to base this lesson on a number of scattered verses

of the Bible, which should all be read by each pupil. The teacher is advised to read Gore, *The Creed of the Christian*, sections on "The Bible in the Church" and "The Inspiration of Scripture," and Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship*, Chapter x.

LESSON 38

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Review. The Holy Spirit aids us to see and to do our duty, bringing forth in our hearts the fruits of peace and righteousness, and so manifests himself continually as the Giver of Life.

Text, 2 St. Peter i. 21. *Bible lessons*: (a) Heb. i. 1—first verse of first Epistle for Christmas-day; (b) Rom. xv. 4—first verse of Epistle for the Second Sunday in Advent; (c) 2 Tim. iii. 14 to end (not in the Prayer Book); (d) St. John xiv. 26—in Gospel for Whitsunday.

In previous lessons we have seen that God revealed his nature and will through the prophets (page 59); that the coming of the Messiah was foretold by them (page 81); and that our Lord, after he rose from the dead, showed his disciples how both his sufferings and his resurrection had been predicted (pages 128 and 130). Our first Bible reference for this lesson (a) tells us that through the prophets God spoke to men in old times by piecemeal and after many fashions, and so prepared for the coming of his Son. And if we read their writings, we find the prophets were conscious that they spoke not of themselves but from God. Cp. Isa. vi. 5 to 9, viii. 11, xxi. 10, xxii. 14; Jer. i. 4 to 10; Ezek. iii. 10 to 15; Amos vii. 15. Thus we can readily see, both from what our

Lord and his apostles say of them and from their writings, that the prophets were men who had a divine message.

This is true also of the writers of the Psalms and the Old Testament history. For the Psalms are full of a devotion and a trustful dependence upon God which makes them voice the thought of devout and faithful people everywhere. And the historical books view all events as governed by God the all-wise and righteous. We should especially notice, moreover, that all the Scriptures, not the prophetic books alone, prepared for the coming of Christ. Cp. Luke xxiv. 27, 44. This is affirmed in (b) our second reference, which follows the quotation of a verse from the Psalms as applying to our Lord. In it St. Paul asserts that the Old Testament Scriptures were written for the instruction of all believers, and establish the hope which arises from trust in Christ. Furthermore we are told (c) of all the Old Testament Scriptures that they are "inspired of God."

This third Bible passage tells us further what the Scriptures are for; they are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"; that is, they are to be read for the upbuilding of our moral character. Compare our Lord's language concerning the moral commandments of the old law in St. Mark vii. 13, where he calls it "the word of God," and in St. Matt. v. 17, 18, where he says he came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. In brief, the great moral and spiritual truths of all the Old Testament have permanent value, and help to make the believer "complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

That the inspiration of the Old Testament was specifically the work of the Holy Spirit is plain from what the prophets say of the Spirit of the LORD. And this is expressly stated in our text, "no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved (or, borne along) by the Holy Ghost," as it may be translated. They "spoke from

God," as with the voice of God, being sent by him. They were "borne along" by the Holy Spirit in giving their message, as a ship is carried onward by the wind. Accordingly we believe that the Holy Ghost "spake by the prophets," and inspired, no less, all the Old Testament writers.

Our conviction that the New Testament is inspired rests first upon our Lord's promise (d) that the Holy Spirit would teach his disciples "all things," and recall to their minds all he had taught. With this we should compare his promise in St. John xvi. 13. These verses make two points clear. First, the Holy Spirit would quicken the disciples' minds to remember rightly what the Master had said and done. Secondly, he would enlighten their minds to understand the full significance of all Christ said and did, and interpret rightly who he is, and what the meaning is of his work for men. This is indicated in our Lord's saying that the Holy Spirit would come in his name, and would not speak for himself. His work is to bring home to men the whole of our Lord's teaching. He would teach them "all things" that belong to their work and life in Christ, and lead them into "all the truth" revealed in Christ. It is not promised that universal knowledge on all subjects would be imparted, but that the message given in Christ's historical human life would be interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

The Gospels are the outcome of the Holy Spirit's work in recalling Christ's whole revelation to the disciples; the Epistles, of his work in teaching them to understand and apply it rightly. We have only to read them to see that our Lord's promise was richly fulfilled. Such sober and carefully honest accounts as the Gospels give of stupendous events and profound teaching could not have been written without the Holy Spirit's guidance. And such wise exposition and application of the truth to the needs of that age and of all future time as the Epistles contain must have been due to

his inspiring power. The book of the Acts, like the Gospels, bears every mark of sober-mindedness and of insight into the significance of the events recorded. And the Revelation is plainly a prophetic work. We can see furthermore that the apostles were conscious of teaching and writing under the Holy Spirit's guidance. Cp. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; Ephes. iii. 3, 5; 1 Thess. ii. 13; Rev. i. 10, ii. 7. This special guidance is to be thought of in connection with the active presence and power of the Holy Spirit which was so abundantly and variously manifested in the New Testament Church (cp. lesson 36), and which began to be shown in prophecy when Christ was about to be born (cp. page 153). The New Testament therefore is one great result of the Holy Spirit's presence in full measure in the Christian Church, and we may be sure that these precious writings are due to his inspiration.

That the Bible is the inspired word of God is a certain truth. Theories as to the nature of inspiration, however, may easily become mechanical, and assert more than is warrantable. To speak of the Scriptures as verbally inspired and infallible, in the sense that every word should be taken literally, or that they may be used, for instance, to prove or disprove scientific truths, is to go beyond what they say of themselves, and to lay stumbling-blocks in the pathway of faith. Our effort should rather be to teach the children that the Bible is the inspired record of God's revelation, which culminates in Jesus Christ, and that it is given to us for our spiritual needs. It may be well, however, to suggest two thoughts which will perhaps help them in later life to develop true ideas of the Bible and to value it as they should. First, inspiration means, "a breathing into," and this implies persons. It means that the Holy Spirit has breathed into the hearts and minds of certain men and thereby given them an insight into divine truth. It is because the writers

of the Scriptures are inspired that we call the Bible inspired, although that term cannot in the strictest sense be applied to a book, but only to persons. The inspiration of the writers, however, makes the Bible a perfectly true and adequate account of the nature of God, of man's real nature, and of the way in which God deals with man in order to raise his nature to its true ideal; it makes the Bible a sure guide in all principles of religion and morals.* Secondly, the Bible has its human as well as its divine side. It was written by real, living men who used the language, style and manner of thought of their own times. Thus the psalmists used the meters and figures of speech natural to the Hebrew language; the prophets preached against the wrong-doing they saw about them, proclaimed God's will as it applied to the circumstances of their day, and looked forward from the standpoint of their times in foretelling what should come to pass; the Gospels have a simplicity and plainness that was natural in their authors; and the letters of the apostles deal in the first instance with questions of faith and duty that were actually pressing in the communities to which they were written. The Bible is an intensely human book, full of the experience of real men, and this makes it appeal strongly to all hearts. The human nature of the writers is not destroyed, any more than Christ's human nature was by his divine nature; but men, continuing still to be real men with their individual peculiarities and even limitations, were moved to see and to record God's truth by the Holy Spirit's breathing into their hearts.

Through the prophets God spoke to men and prepared for the coming of his Son.

The writers of the Psalms and of the Old Testament his-

* Lock, "Why do we call the Bible inspired?" *Oxford House Papers*, first series.

tories had likewise a divine message, and helped to make ready the way of Christ.

All the Old Testament is of permanent value in setting before us great moral and spiritual truths.

Our Lord promised that the Holy Ghost would quicken his disciples' memories, and give them understanding concerning all his revelation.

The New Testament is one great result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church according to Christ's promise.

Inspiration means the breathing of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of real, living men, who were thereby given power truly to see and to record the revelation of God, which culminated in Jesus Christ.

The next lesson considers the Church as being, like the Bible, a result of the Holy Spirit's operation. The great society founded by Jesus Christ, composed of all the baptized throughout the world, apostolic in faith and organization, is likened by St. Paul to a body of which Christ is the head and his people are the members, all one in him. In this Body of Christ the Holy Spirit dwells, making it holy. The teacher should read Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship*, Chapter vi.; and should compare with our Bible lessons St. John xv. 1 to 13, Gospel for St. Mark's Day; Ephes. iv. 15, 16, in Epistle for St. Mark's Day; and 1 Cor. xii. The figure of the body and members should be used as the basis for the lesson, and should be carefully studied and applied.

LESSON 39

**THE CHURCH; ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND
APOSTOLIC**

Review. The Holy Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament are a great work of the Holy Spirit, open to us all, in which the revelation of God, culminating in Christ's Incarnation, can be studied, and which we can use for the moral and spiritual upbuilding of our lives.

Text, Col. i. 18. *Bible lessons*: Ephes. iv. 1 to 7—Epistle for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity; Rom. xii. 4, 5—last part of Epistle for the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

We have seen in lesson 37 that the inner life of the individual Christian depends upon the Holy Spirit. We have now to consider that the individual truly lives only as a member of the great Body which is animated and made one by the Spirit of Christ; and that the same divine Person who sanctifies each Christian sustains the common life which fills the whole Church. This is recognized when we confess our belief concerning the holy Catholic Church in connection with our belief in the Holy Spirit; for thereby we show that we believe the Church has a permanent life because we believe in him, the Giver of Life. Conversely, the present vitality of the Church throughout the world and its past history bear witness, in spite of human failings and sins, to the Holy Spirit, "by whom the whole Church is governed and sanctified."

To understand rightly how we ought to believe and act concerning the Church, of which we were made members in Baptism, we should first observe how St. Paul describes it as one. Imprisoned in consequence of zeal for Christ

and his Church, St. Paul writes to his people in Ephesus, urging them to a true Christian life on the ground that they possess the inestimable privileges of redemption through Christ's death and resurrection and of membership in his Church. Cp. Ephes. i. 18 to end. In the passage chosen for our first Bible lesson he beseeches them to act as becomes their Christian calling, earnestly striving to maintain the unity which is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and the peace which is the condition and mark of his presence with the Church. There is, he says, one body; that is, all Christians form one organic whole, though they are individually many, with varying gifts and powers and with differing positions and duties in the Church. And there is one Spirit, who dwells in and vivifies that body. Likewise there is one hope to which all are pressing forward. Furthermore this unity depends upon the living existence of the one Lord, Jesus Christ, whom all believers apprehend by one common faith, and to whom they are joined by Baptism. And finally this actual union of all Christians is traced back to its ultimate source, the one God and Father of all. Since there is this real and vital union of all Christians with one another in consequence of their union with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we can see that we ought all to recognize thankfully our privilege of membership in the Church, and make the utmost use of it for our spiritual growth. Continuing in that holy fellowship, we must be careful to do all in our power to preserve and strengthen the harmony of the Christian body, lest we hinder the unifying work of the Holy Spirit. "With all lowliness" we must be ready to put self in a lower place (verses 2, 3); with all "meekness" we must avoid being opinionated and brusque, keeping a quiet friendliness when differences threaten to arise; "with longsuffering" we must bear with our fellow - Christians, though they wrong us; we must show forbearance, remem-

bering that others have to bear with us no less than we with them; and that, too, "in love," not as though we did not care whether a brother had faults or not, but as bearing even with his faults because we love him. This applies in the most practical way to the life of every Christian as a member of his parish and of the whole great Church.

Our second Bible lesson begins with a practical exhortation; each Christian should be content with his proper place and functions, cultivating modesty, sobermindedness and good judgment. And why? Because all belong as a matter of actual fact to a great society, which is a single body having many members all related to one another, and the unity of this body is found in Christ. In this organism or corporate body each person ought to live and work in his proper place, using whatever powers he may have for the good of the whole, just as in a human body each of the many members, hand, foot, eye or tongue, has its special work and is needed by the whole body. Cp. 1 Cor. xii.

In some passages, again, St. Paul compares Christ to the head and individual Christians to members of a body, as in our text and in Col. ii. 19. And this makes our duty plain of holding fast to him who supplies and controls the spiritual life and activity of all Christians. For otherwise we shall be like severed parts of a body, or like branches lopped off from a vine (John xv. 1 to 12), which are useless, dead, fit only to be buried or burned. We cannot expect to have Christ's life within us or the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, if we cut ourselves off from the active fellowship of Christ's Church. It is evident from the passages quoted that the Church is a society founded not by men but by Jesus Christ. It is not merely an organization held together simply because it has certain common interests and aims, certain officers and forms of government; but it is a living organism, which has a real relation to the ascended Lord,

and in which his Holy Spirit dwells. And our Lord, who founded this visible society on earth and appointed leaders, the apostles, would have men not only believe in him, but also become members of his society by Baptism, share in its spiritual life, and do its work.

We can now see more clearly why we believe the Church to be one, holy, Catholic and apostolic, as we confess that it is in the Creeds. It is one, because there can be but one Body when there is but one Head, one life-giving Spirit, one God upon whom all depend, one faith, one way of entrance by Baptism. And our Lord himself prayed that all might be one.—John xvii. 20, 21. Christians may, indeed, organize themselves into different groups and call themselves by different names, as Baptists, Methodists, and the like; but Christ has only one Church, to which all the baptized rightly belong. Or the Roman Catholics may set up doctrines, worship and ecclesiastical government which are not according to the commands of Christ and his apostles, but they cannot really unchurch those who are Christ's. Again, the Church is holy, because it is made up of people who are set apart to God, who are, in St. Paul's language, "saints" by virtue of their admission into the Church. It remains for them to make their profession a reality, to become more like God, to whom they have been consecrated. Christ warned us that there would be many evil people in his Church, whom he likens to tares in the field and to bad fishes in a net.—Matt. xiii. 24 to 31, 36 to 44, 47 to 51. These at the last will be cast out from all share in the kingdom. Nevertheless all are meant to be holy, and the Church is holy as being the Body of Christ and the sphere of the Holy Spirit's activity. Catholic means universal, or, more literally, according to the whole. And the Church is Catholic because it is meant for all men in all times; it is not for one nation or people, as the Old Testament Church was for the Jews alone,

but is adaptable to all races and times. Moreover, the Church holds fast to the truth once for all made known in Jesus Christ, as held by the Church in all parts of the world and from the earliest times, neither adding to nor taking away from that which has been received from the Founder; and so it is Catholic in faith and worship. Accordingly it is Catholic in its practical operation and results, since all graces are given in it, all diseases of the soul are healed, all spiritual virtues are imparted, and all the words and works and thoughts of men are regulated, till we become perfect men in Christ Jesus.* Finally, the Church is apostolic, because it is identical with the primitive Church of the apostles, by unbroken descent from Christ himself. And this is manifest in the Creeds, Scriptures, Sacraments and apostolic Orders of our Church to-day. Since the Church is for all men, and since it is built upon the apostles, who were sent forth to "make disciples of all nations," it is in its very nature missionary.

Our Christian life is lived in membership with the Church of Christ, which is made one and made holy by the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost.

St. Paul urges Christians to maintain unity and harmony, because they are all members of one Body, in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

And again he urges us to do our work for Christ each in his own place in the Church, just as the many different parts of our bodies do their own work for the whole.

The Church is likened to a body of which Christ is the head. It is, then, not an organization established by men, but a divine society or organism founded by our Lord.

There is, accordingly, but one Church, and it is holy, Catholic and apostolic.

* Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, article ix.

The next lesson considers another aspect of the truth that all members of Christ are one in him through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the fellowship that exists among all Christians, which ought to be recognized by all in thought and deed, and the union of all who are still upon earth, fighting Christ's battle against sin, with all those who, having gone before us, enjoy the triumph of the Church above. The lesson is based upon other comparisons made by St. Paul, in which he likens the Church to a state or a family, or to a building or a holy temple, of which Jesus Christ is the corner-stone. These figures may be so developed in teaching as to give a concrete, pictorial basis for the lesson, especially if they are introduced by a story of some particular building, some particular man's gaining citizenship, or the like.

LESSON 40

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Review. The Church is the Body of Christ, a society founded by him, in which the Holy Spirit dwells; and of this Body all we who are baptized are members, drawing our life from our union with the Head, and having each his own place and work in the Body.

Text, Col. i. 12. *Bible lesson*, Ephes. ii. 19 to end—Epistle for St. Thomas's Day.

The unity and fellowship of all Christians is set forth under two different comparisons in our Bible lesson. First, the enjoyment of Christian privileges is likened to that which a citizen possesses in being a full member of a commonwealth, and to that which a member of a household enjoys in belonging to a family. We may illustrate St. Paul's

meaning by likening our position as "fellow-citizens with the saints" to that of a man who has the full rights of citizenship, and contrasting it with the position of a man who has come to our land, but belongs to some other country and has not yet become an American citizen. All who become Christians, no matter what their race or worldly position, are received into the full citizenship of God's kingdom. Yes, and our union with our heavenly Father, and so with one another, may be likened to a nearer relationship than that of citizens, for we are not like orphans or outcasts, but are of the household or family of God. This thought we may develop and apply by considering how in the Church we are taught through the Bible, the Creeds and the Catechism, and are nourished through the Holy Communion, and how all our spiritual needs are considered in the Prayer Book, which provides both for daily worship in public and in the family, and for all the important occasions of life from Baptism to Burial.

A second comparison likens all Christians to the stones of a great building, of which the foundation-stones are the apostles and prophets (that is, the New Testament prophets), while the corner-stone, upon which the foundation-course and the whole building depend, is Christ. Thus all Christians form in Christ one great Church. This thought is perhaps all that we can use from the latter part of our Bible lesson, but there are really two more comparisons, which an advanced class, at least, will grasp. In verse 21 St. Paul modifies the figure, and says that in Christ every building grows into a holy temple. That is, every Christian congregation grows in an organic religious life toward holiness. The members of a parish make up an organism, in which the various sides of the religious life develop through the harmonious interworking of the several gifts and powers of the members. And this organic, spiritual growth is "in

the Lord" Jesus Christ, upon whom the unity and holiness depend. Cp. 1 Peter ii. 5. Again in verse 22 the figure changes. Each individual Christian is built up through Christ to be a dwelling-place of God, just as each parish grows into a holy temple. Compare 1 Cor. vi. 19, where it is said that the body of each Christian is a temple of God.

Thus it is evident that all Christians form one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ, being united in him through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is expressed in still another way in our text, where we are bidden to give thanks to the Father, who has made us capable of receiving our portions in the inheritance of the saints. The inheritance of the promised land by the chosen people and its allotment among them is a type of our sharing in Christ's kingdom. As this is a kingdom of light (cp. Col. i. 13), the portion of the saints is "in light," and the thought is the same as in Col. i. 5, that Christ's people share in "the hope which is laid up in heaven." "The saints" is used in the Bible not of men individually who are distinguished by special merits or holiness, but of a class of men, those who were God's people under the Old Covenant, and in the New Testament the Church, the holy nucleus of redeemed humanity. For a man's standing in relation to God is not that of individual righteousness, but that of a member in a community consecrated to a holy life. And so "the communion of saints" means the union and fellowship not only of those whose lives have been eminently saintly, but also of all who are living, faithful members of Christ, however humble and unnoticed.

St. Paul speaks in these passages of the unity among Christians here upon earth, and we may well emphasize this side of the communion of saints. For if we are all united in being children of our heavenly Father, in sharing the sal-

vation wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ, in possessing the help of the Holy Spirit, we ought to feel and act toward our fellow-Christians accordingly. To be sure, all men are brothers, as being children of the one God and Father of all, and we ought to treat all as our neighbors. But just as a human society, or a nation, or a family involves close ties and particular duties, so we ought to feel bound together with all our fellow-Christians by real ties of the closest sort, and ought to act toward them with special love and kindness. If those who join some human society, some lodge, some college fraternity, or the like, recognize that they have special duties toward one another, much more ought we to recognize our special duties toward our fellow-Christians.

But the communion of saints is by no means confined to those members of Christ who are in this world. We know that those who have gone from us are in his keeping, and will rise again at the last day. We who are alive belong to that part of his one Body which is called the Church militant, because it is still fighting his warfare against sin. But all the redeemed who have died are alive in paradise, and form the Church expectant. Cp. Rev. xiv. 13, which is used in the Burial Service. In God's good time all shall live together in the Church triumphant. Consequently we do not think of the departed as really separated from us, but as being united with us by the closest relations in Christ. For the saints in paradise are one with the living in being members of the one Church of Christ; they hold the same faith, they have lived like us the Christian life, and they join in the universal and eternal worship of God. Accordingly we keep saints' days to commemorate the greatest of the saints, and All Saints' Day in remembrance of the blessed company of all the faithful departed; and we do this in order to remind ourselves of the close fellowship existing among all in whom the Holy Spirit works to holiness, to stir up in ourselves thankfulness

for all whom God has saved, to incite us to study and follow their good examples, and to raise our thoughts to the unseen world for which we are preparing here. These truths ought to rouse us to high faith and to a pure and vigorous Christian life, as we are so wonderfully taught in Hebrews xi. and xii. And when those whom we love are taken from us, we are not "sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him" (cp. 1 Thess. iv. 13 to end), but comfort ourselves with the knowledge that we are still united with them in Christ.

The privilege of membership in Christ's Church may be likened to that of citizenship and that of membership in a family.

All Christians are like stones in a great building, of which the corner-stone is Christ.

Christians are made capable of inheriting a share with all the saints in the kingdom of light.

Thus there is a close and real union among all Christians upon earth, and they ought to act toward one another accordingly.

And the communion of saints likewise embraces all who have gone from earth, so that we should follow the pattern of their faith and goodness, and find comfort in the knowledge that we are one with them in Christ.

The next lesson, on the forgiveness of sins, brings before us the great need of mankind for the revelation of God and his righteous will, for the atoning work of Christ and for the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. It helps us to see that the Creeds express living truths of the utmost practical importance for our religious needs. And, rightly taught, this lesson should deepen the children's heartfelt faith in God, by helping them to feel their personal need of salvation from

sin. To accomplish this the teacher must develop the lesson in the manner that his own religious experience and real sense of spiritual need suggest.

LESSON 41

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Review. All the members of Christ are united in him by the closest of ties; and this fellowship is a basis for mutual love and good works, and a source of the truest comfort when we are parted by death from those we love.

Text, Acts ii. 38. *Bible lessons*: St. Matt. ix. 1 to 9—Gospel for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity; St. John xx. 21 to 24—last part of Gospel for the First Sunday after Easter.

When we were made members of Christ's Church in Baptism our sins were washed away, and to this the Creeds particularly refer, especially the Nicene Creed, in which we say, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." This is highly appropriate, inasmuch as the Creed is used at Baptism to confess the faith that is required in order to receive the remission of sins. Our text shows that a salient feature in the preaching of the apostles was the forgiveness of sins through Baptism. But we have further need of forgiveness for sins committed afterwards. For, although every Christian was washed in baptism from all stain of sin (1 Cor. vi. 11), and was consecrated to God, no one has attained to perfection. Cp. Phil. iii. 12. Each of us must press forward in the way of salvation through obstacles and with many stumblings. Hence there is constant need of forgiveness for sins committed daily. We must not think

ourselves righteous like the Pharisee in the parable (Luke xviii. 9 to 15—Gospel for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity), or suppose that in doing good we do more than our duty and deserve a reward, so that our good deeds merit the forgiveness of our sins (Luke xvii. 10). “All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.”—Rom. iii. 23. Cp. Rom. vi. 23; Psalm 51: 1 to 4, 9 to 13; 1 John i. 8, 9, sentence in Morning Prayer. Every Christian ought to be deeply conscious that he needs forgiveness.

Forgiveness, we know (cp. lesson 24), depends upon the atoning death of Christ.—Ephes. i. 7. Because our Saviour has redeemed us from sin by his sacrifice of himself, he has power to forgive us our sins. This he taught when he healed the paralyzed man, as we are told in our first Bible lesson. When the faith of the man and of his friends was shown by their eagerness to reach the Saviour’s presence (Luke v. 18 to 21), our Lord said to him, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” And some of the scribes, who were watching for an opportunity to oppose him, said to themselves, “He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God alone?” They recognized rightly how tremendous a matter it is to forgive sins, something that belongs to God only. But since our Lord is “the Son of Man,” that is, the Christ, he could forgive sins even as his Father can, from whom he has this authority. Cp. John v. 25 to 31. Therefore he replied that it is easy to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” or to say to a paralytic, “Arise and walk.” But, that they might know he spoke truly when he said the man was forgiven, though the truth of this could not be seen by the eye, he said to the man, “Take up thy bed.” And when the man arose and walked, it was evident that our Lord had the power of healing and the even mightier spiritual power to forgive.

In our second Bible lesson we learn of our Lord’s imparting to his Church the authority to forgive which he possessed

as the Christ and the risen Saviour. The apostles and the other disciples with them were gathered together on the evening of the first Easter-day, and Jesus appeared in their midst. After he had assured them that it was he himself whom they saw, he breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." We must not confuse this occurrence with the descent of the Holy Spirit in full power at Pentecost; but it does teach us that forgiveness is brought to us, the atoning merits of the Saviour's death are applied to the individual members of Christ, through the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit. The main point, however, that concerns us here is that our Lord conferred upon his Church, of which the apostles were by his appointment the leaders, authority to declare the remission of their sins to all who truly repent and believe. In every branch of the Church this authority is committed to those who are ordained to the priesthood. Cp. page 522 of the Prayer Book. When, therefore, the absolution (cp. pages 4, 5 or 231 of the Prayer Book) is pronounced by God's ministers, we should receive it as a true declaration that God forgives our sins, provided, as is said in the absolution, we have true faith (John iii. 16, Acts x. 43) and true repentance (Luke xiii. 5 and our text) with a steadfast purpose to obey God.

Thus God in his love has provided a way in which the burden of sins with which everyone has ladened himself may be removed. For he sent his only Son to redeem us, and he forgives us for our Saviour's sake. And this forgiveness is brought to each of us by the Holy Spirit, working normally through the Church and its appointed ministry. For God's goodness in healing our sins, without which we could not have peace of conscience or be saved from eternal death, we ought to be profoundly thankful. And the thought of God's forgiveness ought likewise to lead us to full forgive-

ness of any wrongs we may suffer from others.—Ephes. iv. 32, Matt. vi. 12 to 16.

Every Christian was cleansed in Baptism from all his sins; but he has also deep need of forgiveness for sins committed afterwards.

Our Lord has power to forgive sins, as he taught when he healed the paralytic.

He imparted to his Church authority to declare through its appointed ministers God's pardon of sins.

Thus the forgiveness of sins, secured to us through God's love by the atoning death of Christ, is brought to each Christian through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The next lesson and the one following require careful thought in order to bring out the full, definite meaning of the figurative language of Scripture, and yet to give the pupils truly spiritual ideas concerning the resurrection of the body and the future life.

LESSON 42

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Review. The forgiveness of sins, won for us by the atoning death of Christ, is brought to each Christian, who has true repentance and faith, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Text, St. John xi. 25, 26. *Bible lessons:* 1 Cor. xv. 20 to 23—first part of Lesson in the Burial Service; 1 Thess. iv. 13 to end (not in the Prayer Book).

Because our Lord rose from the dead we believe that we too shall rise. He is the first-fruits of the great harvest which

shall be gathered at the end of the world. Just as surely as all men, descended from our first human ancestor, through whom sin came to the race, must die, so surely all shall be made alive in Christ, who won the victory over sin and death by his resurrection. This is the truth which St. Paul sets forth in our first Bible lesson. It follows that our risen life will be after the pattern of our Lord's. "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—1 John iii. 2. Now his risen body was real, and was the same body in which he was crucified, having still the prints of the nails and the spear-wound. Yet it was a glorified body, no longer subject to the weaknesses and limitations of our earthly life. He could come and go, for example, even though doors were shut or distance intervened. So when we rise at the last great day our bodies will be restored, the same bodies in which we now live, yet glorified, freed from pain, weakness and imperfection, and made like the glorious resurrection body of our Lord, "who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—Phil. iii. 21, in Epistle for the Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

It may be asked how it is possible that our bodies will be restored after they are dead, and are perhaps so completely destroyed that no trace of them is left. But this, St. Paul tells us (1 Cor. xv. 35 ff.), is a foolish question, showing ignorance of God's power and of the truth concerning the spiritual body. For when seed is sown it must die, that is, in sprouting be destroyed, before it can spring up to new life. And when sown it is not yet the plant it shall be, but mere seed; yet God gives "to every seed a body of its own." So God will give to each of us a body renewed and glorified, yet our own. Our bodies must be buried, as seed is sown, to corruption, in weakness, as natural bodies; but they shall

be raised incorruptible, in power, as spiritual bodies. For besides natural bodies there are spiritual bodies, just as truly as there are many kinds of natural bodies among living creatures, some of greater glory and some of less. Therefore doubts concerning the possibility of our rising again can trouble us only if we imagine that all the laws and limitations of our present, material existence apply to our future life. Cp. Matt. xxii. 23 to 31.

Our Lord himself, who rose and who now reigns in heaven, will, by his coming again in glory, raise up his who sleep in the grave. This is the teaching of our second Bible lesson, with which should be compared St. Matt. xxv. 31, 32, Rev. xx. 12, 13, St. John v. 25 to 30. As Jesus died and rose again, St. Paul assures us, so those who sleep in Jesus God will bring with him. The underlying thought here is that, as Christ and all true Christians form one vital organism, what happens to the Head must happen to the members, and that where he is there they must be. Accordingly, when Christ appears those who sleep in him will be brought with him by God's power, of which he is the agent; they will be united with him at his coming, and have their full share in the benefits of his appearing. Those who are still alive when he comes again will not precede those who have died before, but all alike will be joined with him. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 51 to end. Thus he who raised the widow's son, the daughter of Jāirus, and Lazarus, who himself rose as the first-fruits of the dead, shall be, when he comes again, "the resurrection and the life" to all the faithful.

The resurrection of the body means that we shall enjoy a complete life in the world to come, retaining all the parts of our being. Our personal identity will be fully preserved, so that we shall know our friends and be known by them, and shall be forever the kind of persons that we begin to be now. And since our bodies are to be as really a part of us in the future life as we find them to be now, the practical lesson is impressively enforced that the body is to be revered both in life and when dead, and is to be kept pure as the temple of God, in which his Holy Spirit dwells. Cp. Rom. viii. 11; 1 John iii. 3, in Epistle for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The resurrection of our Lord assures us that we too shall rise, and that our bodies shall be glorified after the likeness of his.

Questions as to how this is possible can trouble us only if we forget God's power and the truth that "there is a spiritual body."

Our Lord will himself come again to raise up all who have died, and to summon all who are living when he comes, that the faithful may forever be with him.

The resurrection of the body teaches us the completeness of our personal existence after death, and the reverence due to our bodies.

The next lesson sets before us in figurative language the reality and glory of the life everlasting, which God offers to all his children, and which all who are redeemed and sanctified shall surely inherit.

LESSON 43

THE LIFE EVERLASTING

Review. Because Christ rose from the dead with the same body in which he died, though now a glorified body, we believe that we too shall be raised by him with our bodies, which, though buried weak and corruptible, shall rise in glory.

Text, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *Bible lessons*: St. John xiv. 1 to 4—first part of Gospel for St. Philip and St. James's Day; Rev. vii. 9 to 13—last part of Epistle for All Saints' Day.

In our Lord's discourse with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion he forewarned them of the sorrow about to come, and then told them of the heavenly mansions prepared for them. He was about to depart from them, and that, too, through the suffering of the cross; but he promised he would prepare a place for his followers, and would return for them, that they might be with him. The saying about "the many mansions" likens heaven to a great temple of God or to a royal palace, in which there are many rooms; and the thought is that place will be found there for all who are faithful, a place in the presence of God, where his children shall be at home. There they shall have the vision of God and his Christ, and share in the glory and happiness which the Saviour has won for them. This inheritance is for all those who, following their Master's example, have overcome temptation and endured even unto death.

In St. John's visions of the future he saw the multitude of the redeemed in heaven, countless in number, of all races of men. He saw them stand before the throne of God and

before Christ, the Lamb of God, who was slain for us, and who now shares the glory and dominion of the Father. They were clothed in white, the symbol of purity and of joy, and they had in their hands palm-branches, which men used to carry upon a festival, as the multitudes did who accompanied our Lord at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.—John xii. 13; cp. 1 Macc. xiii. 51. They gave praise to God and the Lamb for their salvation, and the angels, the elders and the four living creatures before God's throne joined with them in the praise and worship of God. The verses in the seventh chapter of Revelation which follow our second Bible lesson tell us that these who are arrayed in white robes have come out of great tribulation and have washed and made white their robes in the blood of the Lamb. That is, they have overcome evil in spite of suffering, and have been cleansed through faith by the atoning blood of Christ (cp. 1 John i. 7). Therefore they are in the presence of God, and serve him forever, knowing perfectly his love, seeing the full vision of his glory, praising him with unclouded happiness and carrying out his will in noble tasks.

Thus we have in the words of our Lord and the beloved apostle promises of everlasting life in the world to come, full of happiness and deepest satisfaction. We cannot hope to understand fully now what that life shall be, and we must not take these promises in a literal and material sense. Yet, though they are expressed in figurative language, the meaning is no less real and deep on that account. For it is not any lack in the reality, but only in our power of apprehending it, that makes our knowledge of the world to come incomplete, and makes figurative language the best medium for conveying to us so much as we can grasp concerning the future life. For that life is better and happier than we can imagine, as is said so beautifully in our text.

This eternal life begins now, since it depends upon our

being faithful members of Christ, who believe in God and serve him truly. What we begin to be now determines what we shall be hereafter. There can be no magic change in the characters that are formed in this life; either men have Christ's life within them, and grow into his likeness; or, putting aside that life and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, they decay spiritually until they are ready for the second death. We ought, therefore, never to forget the awful possibility of losing heaven through failure to fit ourselves by God's help for that glorious existence. And the eternal things which are not seen should be so real to us that we "reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed."—Rom. viii. 18.

Our Lord has promised to prepare a heavenly home into which he will receive all who follow him faithfully.

St. John saw in vision the multitude of the redeemed before the Lord rejoicing forever in his presence.

The joy of the life everlasting, thus revealed to us, is higher than our thought can conceive.

Eternal life begins now, since what we begin to be here determines what we shall be hereafter.

REVIEW

The next hour should be used for a review of lessons 34 to 43 inclusive, the aim being to make clear the personality of the Holy Spirit, and his work in making the people of God holy. Our Lord promised that after his departure from earth he would send the Comforter as his Vicar, who should cause him and the Father to dwell with the faithful. The Holy Spirit accordingly came upon the disciples at Pentecost, and was made known to them by outward signs

and inward power as the divine Lord to whom men may pray for strength and guidance. His presence was a fact of daily experience to the New Testament Christians, who knew him as a divine Person, a Friend present with them. Us, too, he aids now to see and do our duty, bringing forth in our hearts the fruits of righteousness, and manifesting himself continually as the Giver of Life. Two notable means by which he exercises his sanctifying power are the Bible and the Church. For he inspired the sacred writers to see and record God's revelation, culminating in Christ; and he thus has made the Scriptures a mighty aid, when faithfully used, in building up Christian character. The Church is the normal sphere of his action, being the Body of Christ in which the Holy Spirit dwells, conveying the life of the Head to the members. All the members of Christ, both the living and the departed, are accordingly united in him through his Spirit by the closest of ties, and form one communion and fellowship. Working normally through the Church, the Holy Spirit brings forgiveness of sins to every Christian who has true repentance and faith. And thus, as a result of his sanctifying operation, all faithful Christians are prepared for the resurrection and the life everlasting.

Our concluding lesson brings us back again to the fundamental truths that God is one and that his essential nature is love. The three divine Persons, who are as such eternally distinct from one another, and who are made manifest to us in creation, redemption and sanctification, are not three Gods, but one God. This most important lesson should in no case be passed over or slighted; indeed, more than one hour may well be given to it, that the truth of God's essential unity may be thoroughly enforced. The teacher should review pages 24 to 29 and lessons 3, 4, 5 and 9.

LESSON 44

THE HOLY TRINITY; THREE PERSONS, ONE GOD

Text, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. *Bible lesson*, St. Matt. iii. 16, 17 (not in the Prayer Book, but printed in the *Outline*).

Our study has shown us what God the Father has done for us in creating us and all the world, and what he does now in preserving and caring for all mankind. It has shown us that God the Son came to earth to redeem us, giving us a complete revelation of the Father who sent him, and a perfect example of obedience to the Father's righteous will, atoning for our sins by his death, and restoring life to us by his rising again; and that he now lives and reigns as our ascended King, who will come again to judge the world and to raise up all men, that the faithful may reign with him forever. It has shown us, thirdly, that the Holy Spirit came to sanctify all the people of God, descending upon Christ's disciples in full power, teaching them to remember and apply all that the Saviour had revealed, establishing the Church, and guiding the spread of Christ's kingdom among men; and that he now gives us grace and power to do our duty and to grow up into such characters as God can approve and accept. Thus we have learned that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are real Persons, distinct from one another, and that we have definite relations to them, since we depend upon them for our creation, redemption and sanctification. And we have seen that each Person is revealed to us through acts and operations that our minds can apprehend. We must now return to the underlying truth that these three Persons are one God.

At the Baptism of our Lord the three Persons are revealed

together as individually distinct and yet as essentially one. The incarnate Son comes before us in the Gospel story in bodily, human form, receiving Baptism at the hands of St. John, the Father is revealed by the voice from heaven, and the Holy Spirit is made manifest by his descent upon the Saviour as a dove. This impressive revelation is made in a way that even children can grasp, and the scene upon the banks of Jordan should occupy the central place in our lesson. The teacher may note in studying it some points which probably will not come up in teaching. Jesus was baptized by St. John not because there was in him any sin which needed to be washed away, but because he wished to be treated in all respects as man, and to leave nothing undone which God had shown to be his will. Accordingly, as he submitted before to circumcision, so now he was baptized, recognizing St. John's work as a part of God's plan of redemption. With regard to the voice from heaven, the question whether it was audible to the outward ear, or was an inner, prophetic voice in the heart of Jesus or of St. John, matters not for our present purpose; in either case God the Father was distinctly revealed. The like is true with regard to the revelation of the Holy Spirit, whether the sign of his coming was visible to the outward eye, or was seen by Jesus and the Baptist through inner, prophetic vision. Again, we may not be able to understand all that is involved in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon our divine Saviour, or why it should be needful; but we can see this, at least, that the Holy Spirit was given to him as man to equip him fully for his work, while as the Son of God he imparted the Holy Spirit to believers, baptizing them with the Holy Ghost.—Matt. iii. 11, Acts i. 5.

Thus the Baptism of our Lord brings before us the two most fundamental points of New Testament doctrine; that God sent his Son to redeem all who would accept him, and

that the risen and glorified Christ sends the Holy Spirit to make all who truly believe partakers of redemption. That the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world is set forth by his words approving the mission and work of Jesus as Messiah and Saviour; and that our Lord sends the Holy Spirit is made known by his receiving the Holy Spirit in order to impart him to all believers. Moreover, since the Holy Spirit is given to men by the Messiah, it follows that he stands in relation to the Son of God no less than to the Father; he is the Spirit of God, and is also the Spirit of Christ, as the apostles so frequently name him. Accordingly the unity of the three Persons is revealed at our Lord's Baptism by their harmonious working for man's salvation, in the great plan of which all share, the Father sending the Son, and the Son the Holy Spirit. Our Lord and his apostles constantly speak of the trinity and the unity of the Godhead in connection with the truths of our preservation and salvation and of our dependence upon the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. From this point of view we can best apprehend the mystery of the Holy Trinity, so far as our spiritual vision can reach, and can best see the profound practical importance to us of faith in the triune God. And so we do well to observe how our Lord's Baptism reveals to us the three divine Persons into whose Name we have been baptized, and their unity.

Behind these manifestations of the three divine Persons, however, lies the essential being of God, to which his revelation of himself in the great plan of salvation corresponds. And so, while our thoughts cannot penetrate fully to the inner relations of the Holy Trinity, we believe there are personal distinctions within the divine Essence, so that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not merely temporary forms in which the one God has shown himself to men for their good, but that there are eternally, in the everlasting reality of heaven no less than in the history of man's redemp-

tion, the three Persons in the one Godhead, whom the angels praise forever as "Holy, Holy, Holy."—Rev. iv. 8, in Epistle for Trinity Sunday. Cp. Hymn 383. The essential unity of the Godhead is no less clear than this distinction of the Persons. For the men whom our Lord taught were absolutely certain with regard to the fundamental and characteristic truth of the Old Testament religion, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD"; and this truth is constantly assumed and enforced by our Saviour's teaching. We, like his first disciples, cannot possibly doubt that God is one. And so when we, like them, are confronted with the two great truths, which seem at first sight contradictory, the unity of God, and the actual revelation of the three divine Persons, we accept them both; and guided by the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, and by the interpretation of the facts of revelation given in all ages by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we confess our belief that the three Persons are not three Gods but one God. For we believe that the Father is the one Source from whom the Son is begotten, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son.

The essential nature of God is necessarily beyond our comprehension, but we may know it truly, though partially, through his revelation of himself, and may understand that revelation better by viewing it from the standpoint of the Creed. Analogies, too, may be helpful as illustrations. We could, for example, imagine all the functions of government, legislative, judicial and executive, to be vested in three wise and just men, who yet should form one harmonious and powerful government. This may give a faint idea of the supreme unity of God. Or we may, somewhat as in lesson 3, illustrate this truth by the unity of the sun, the one source from whence proceeds light and heat; or by the unity of a man's personality in its inner being, upon which depend his

reason and his love. The very imperfection, too, of all such analogies, shows us that we may have a true though partial knowledge of God's nature; since we are sure of the real unity of the sun's energy or of a man's personality, though we can understand them only so far as we know what they do. Finally, we should emphasize once more the profound practical value in the doctrine of the Trinity as the teaching which alone completely sets forth the love of God. The doctrine is revealed to us through the redeeming love of God in sending his Son to us and in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Belief in the corresponding heavenly reality, that the three Persons, though distinct, are essentially one in an eternal Unity, makes us see that the inmost nature of God is love.

The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are plainly revealed to us in the story of redemption.

They were manifested together at the Baptism of our Lord as distinct Persons, yet harmoniously One.

Our Lord's Baptism sets before us the two basal truths that the Father sent the Son to redeem us, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit to sanctify us.

Corresponding to this revelation in the history of redemption is the heavenly reality of the Holy Trinity, three Persons, one only God.

This divine reality, partially but truly known through God's revelation of himself, discloses to us the truth that God is love.

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